102-6
11

Theological Seminary.
PRINCETON, N. J.

Part of the
ADDISON ALEXANDER LIBRARY,
which was presented by
MESSRS. R. L. AND A. STUART.

Case, Division SCC
Shelf, Section 10,638
Book, No. v. 3

THEOLOGICAL WORKS,

PUBLISHED AT DIFFERENT TIMES,

AND NOW COLLECTED INTO VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

THEOLOGICAL WORKS,

PUBLISHED AT DIFFERENT TIMES,

AND NOW COLLECTED INTO VOLUMES.

BY THOMAS SCOTT,

RECTOR OF ASTON SANDFORD, BUCKS.

VOL. III.

FUNERAL SERMONS.
MISSIONARY SERMONS.
RIGHTS OF GOD.
ANSWER TO T. PAINE.
CIVIL GOVERNMENT, AND THE DUTIES OF SUBJECTS.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM W. WOODWARD, CORNER OF SECOND AND CHESNUT STREETS.

1810.

CONTENTS

OF

THE THIRD VOLUME.

FUNERAL SERMONS.

Page.

SERMON I.—Luke xii. 40. *Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not* 5

On the Rev. Dr. Conyers, of Deptford.

SERMON II.—2 Cor. v. 14, 15. *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him, which died for them, and rose again* - 43

On John Thornton, Esq.

SERMON III.—Phillipians i. 21. *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain* - - - - - - - 87

On the Rev. Jeremiah Newell, Vicar of Great Missenden.

MISSIONARY SERMONS.

Page.

SERMON I.—Ephesians ii. 12. *At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world* - - - 147

First Sermon preached before the Society for Missions to Africa and the East.

SERMON II.—Luke x. 2. *Therefore, said he unto them, the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest* - - - - 193

Before the London Missionary Society.

THE RIGHTS OF GOD.

Page.

PREFACE - - - - - - - - 229

INTRODUCTION - - - - - - - 231

PART I.

Containing the Rights of God, as the Creator, providential Benefactor, and moral Governor of the World - 235

PART II.

The Rights of God, in respect of his dealings with sinful creatures - - - - - - - - 263

A Vindication of the Divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures,

In Answer to Mr. Paine's 'Age of Reason.'

Page.

PREFACE - - - - - - - - 315

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.—*The Books of Moses* - - - 319
CHAP. II.—*The Historical Books of the Old Testament* 350
CHAP. III.—*From Job to Solomon's Song* - - 369
CHAP. IV.—*The Prophets* - - - - 375
CHAP. V.—*The New Testament* - - - 394

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.—*Revelation* - - - - - 421
CHAP. II.—*Miracles* - - - - - 430
CHAP. III.—*Prophecy* - - - - - 440
CHAP. IV.—*The Canon of Scripture voted for* - 445
CHAP. V.—*Mystery* - - - - - 454
CHAP. VI.—*Redemption* - - - - 458
CHAP. VII.—*The Insufficiency of Deism* - - 466
CHAP. VIII.—*The Nature and Tendency of Christianity* 471

Impartial Statement of the Scripture Doctrine in respect of Civil Government, and the Duties of Subjects.

CHAP. I.—*Propositions concerning Civil Government as the Ordinance of God* - - - - - 487
CHAP II.—*Things not the Duty of Subjects to their Rulers* - - - - - - - 492
CHAP. III.—*Duties incumbent on us to our Rulers, and in respect of Civil Government* - - - 496

FUNERAL

SERMONS.

Preparation for Death and Judgment.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT

THE LOCK CHAPEL, APRIL 30th, 1786.

ON OCCASION OF THE

DEATH OF THE REV. DR. CONYERS,

OF DEPTFORD.

N. B. The following Sermon was preached, merely as a practical improvement of the affecting providential dispensation which gave occasion for it: but, an application from a most respectable quarter, induced the Author to publish it, of which he had previously no intention. And as the subject is most important, and the instructions, he trusts, scriptural, he would leave it in the hands of God, hoping and praying that some good may be done by it.

SERMON I.

LUKE xii. 40.

Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

THE frequency with which this warning, and others to the same effect, are inculcated in the sacred scriptures, alone evinces their importance. Three Evangelists record the prophecy of our Lord concerning the approaching desolation of Jerusalem: and they all gradually draw off our thoughts from the event primarily intended; lead them to a still more solemn and interesting scene, even the second coming of Christ to judge the world; and then conclude with a warning similar to that of my text. "Therefore be ye also ready; for "in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man "cometh."* "Take ye heed, watch and pray, for "ye know not when the time is."† "Take heed to "yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be over-

* Matt. xxiv. 44. † Mark xiii. 33.

" charged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the " cares of this life, and so that day come upon you " unawares; for as a snare shall it come upon all them " that dwell upon the face of the whole earth.—Watch " ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be ac- " counted worthy to escape all these things which " shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of " man."*

In this chapter the same improvement is made of another subject. A certain person, as it appears, unseasonably interrupting our Lord's discourse, requested him to " speak to his brother to divide the " inheritance with him:" Our blessed Saviour, however, declining this as foreign to his character and employment, thence takes occasion to caution his audience against covetousness; impresses this caution on their minds, by the parable of him, who rich to himself, and not to God, was summoned by death, just when he was purposing to enjoy his affluence, and promising to himself many years of worldly felicity; and enforces on his disciples indifference about worldly things, contentment with a little, trust in Providence, fruitfulness in works of mercy, and habitual preparation for death and judgment. This last he illustrates by the situation of a servant, appointed to watch for his lord's return from a wedding: and by that of a householder expecting the assault of a thief. Sobriety and watchfulness would be incumbent on persons thus circumstanced, much more on us— " Be ye therefore ready also; for at an hour, when ye

* Luke xxi. 34—36.

" think not, the Son of Man cometh."—From which interesting words we will,

I. Consider the event, for which we are exhorted to be ready.

II. Enquire wherein that readiness consists.

III. Propose some arguments, which prove the necessity of our being always ready.

And whilst I endeavour to discourse on these subjects; may the Lord impress all our minds with deep solemnity; present eternal things to our view in their certainty, nearness, and importance; enable us rightly to understand and willingly to entertain the instruction contained in these words; and to speak and hear, as if from this sermon we expected an immediate summons to meet our Judge.

I. Let us consider the event, for which we are exhorted to be ready.

And here our subject necessarily leads us to consider our situation in this world. Before an audience assembled to worship God and hear his word, many things may be assumed as truths, which in some places might require, and would easily admit of, abundant proof. The first principle of all our religious enquiries, is the existence of one God; who is infinite in greatness, majesty, glory, and excellency: the everlasting, self-existent, and universal Creator and Upholder of all things: worthy of all possible love, worship, honour and submission; " whose is the king-" dom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. " Amen." His creatures we are, " from him we " have life, and breath, and all things," " and in him " we live, and move, and have our being." Consti-

tuted diverse from, and superior to, all the other inhabitants of this lower world, we are evidently intended for other and nobler purposes than they. Being capable of the knowledge of God, and of our relations and obligations unto him; of perceiving the glory of his perfections, as reflected from all his works; of discerning between moral good and evil; and of performing a reasonable and voluntary service; we appear designed expressly for the exercise of religion, and to perform that worship and service to our Maker and Benefactor, of which he is so worthy, and to which he hath so just a claim. We alone are able to understand and to be governed by, a law; to be influenced by motives, and actuated by hopes and fears of future consequences; and therefore we alone of all creatures here below, are accountable to our Maker for our conduct.

These things are, indeed, the probable conjectures of reason; but they stand not on that basis: divine revelation confirms the conclusions of our understanding, and with authority also demands our belief of the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, a future judgment, and an eternal state of retributions: in which the whole man, both body and soul, shall enjoy the most exquisite felicity, or endure the most intense and inexpresssible misery for ever, "according to the things done in the body, whether they be good, or evil."

But this is not all. We are not only rational and accountable creatures, and in a future state designed for immortal existence: we are also fallen and sinful creatures.—Our great Creator, Governor, and Judge,

hath given us a perfect law, reasonable, equitable, and good in all its requirements: immortal life and felicity are in it promised to him, who yields obedience; an awful curse is pronounced against every transgressor.—"By this law is the knowledge of sin." Every deviation * from its perfection, whether by omission or commission, by excess or deficiency, is sin. And the wages of sin is death. Love of God with all our powers, and love of all men as ourselves, form the substance of this law; which, excellent and lovely as it is, shuts all men up under condemnation. For being thus *spiritual*, and having respect, as much to the affections, imaginations, and intentions of the heart, as to the words of the tongue, or actions of the life, it condemns ten thousand things, which we naturally should not esteem deserving of condemnation. Thus our Lord pronounces causeless anger and malice to be an infringement of the sixth commandment; and lewd imaginations, desires, and intentions, to be adultery in the sight of God. "And he that keepeth the "whole law, and offendeth in one point, is guilty of "all;" for, like other laws, it condemns a man for one transgression: nor can it be pleaded in arrest of judgment, that we never broke the law before, nor ever intend to break it again; or though we have committed adultery, we never committed theft or murder. Such pleas would not avail us before man's tribunal, nor will they at the bar of God.

From mount Sinai the Lord himself delivered this law, in ten commandments, with every circumstance

* ανομια, 1 John iii. 4.

of terror, which could express the wretched condition of mankind as sinners under its condemnation; and warn them to flee from the wrath to come, to the salvation of the gospel, held forth to the Israelites by bloody sacrifices, and divers purifications.—These very commandments have now in the name and presence, and by the authority of God, been pronounced in your hearing: and upon your bended knees, as transgressors, you have supplicated mercy: as prone to transgress, have besought the Lord to "incline "your hearts to keep each precept," "and to write "them in your hearts." I trust this is not with all of you a mere form, but that you are deeply convinced, that such is your character and situation: yet, with too many, this is all a solemn mockery; and they have neither in their judgment of themselves, correspondent sentiments, nor in their hearts, suitable affections.

But would you seriously compare your whole temper and conduct; your thoughts, words, and actions; your pursuits and pleasures, your behaviour to God and man; the government of your appetites and passions; your manner of spending your time and substance; the use you have made of your abilities and influence in times past, and are making of them at present: would you, I say, compare these things impartially with this holy law of God, after mature reflection you could not deny, that you have broken every one of the ten commandments. We have broken the first commandment, by idolizing ourselves and the world; by proud self-admiration; and by supremely valuing, pursuing, and delighting in earthly

things. We have broken the second, by mean unworthy thoughts of God, neglecting his instituted worship, and preferring our own or other human inventions. The third, by irreligion and profaneness, and irreverence to the sacred name of our God. The fourth, by neglecting to keep holy, and by actually profaning his day in worldly employments, trifling engagements, or carnal indulgences. And all the rest by misbehaving ourselves in relative life; being injurious to the persons, connexions, property, or characters of our neighbours; by covetous, sensual, ambitious, revengeful imaginations, wishes, purposes, conversation, and behaviour. Thus, without supposing you guilty of any gross and scandalous wickedness, (which, nevertheless, I fear many of you have been and are) let your own conscience determine whether I have not proved you and myself guilty of transgressing all the ten commandments, and under the condemnation of the whole law.

On this account, death reigns and triumphs.—"By "one man sin entered into the world, and death by "sin, and so death passed upon all men, in that all "have sinned."—Death is no debt of nature, as some affect to call it, but a debt to divine justice. A publick execution implies previous condemnation and criminality. Having sinned, we are condemned. Hear the sentence, "Dust thou art, and to dust "thou shalt return." Death is the execution of that sentence. Nothing, but the hatred which a God of holiness bears to sin, could induce him to destroy the admirable work of his own hands; for, in the ener-

getick language of the Holy Spirit "it repenteth "him, that he hath made man."

Many crimes injurious to society are thought deserving of an ignominious and violent death, which is all the punishment that man can inflict:—"Having "killed the body, he hath no more that he can do." But what are all the little concerns of men, compared with the glory of God, and the interests of his universal and everlasting kingdom? And what are all crimes against society, compared with the malignity of the creature's rebellion against his Creator, the infinitely glorious God? The injustice, ingratitude, contempt, enmity, opposition, and perverseness that is in every sin, can only be estimated by his infinite mind, who sees every thing and every character in their true colours, and judges of every thing according to truth. And he who deems sin deserving of the everlasting punishment of body and soul in hell, hath denounced this sentence against all sinners, and will certainly execute it upon all who do not repent and believe the Gospel.

Left under this awful sentence, all must have inevitably perished. We could have contrived no method of salvation, which might consist with the honour of God: we could have made no atonement to divine justice for our sins: the depraved disposition of our heart even precluded all *sincere* endeavours to attain unto that "holiness, without which no man shall see "the Lord:" nor could we ever have rectified the temper of our hearts, any more than Satan can recover his former rectitude, and rise by his own power to be a holy angel. Nay, left entirely to ourselves,

we should every day grow more wicked, sink deeper under condemnation, and increase the weight of our eternal misery. Nor do I hesitate to say (what I trust is warranted by the word of God,) that, as certainly as all men sooner or later must die, notwithstanding all human contrivances and endeavours to the contrary: so all men must have perished for ever, without help from themselves or others, had not a gracious God interposed. The plan of redemption by the blood of the Son of God, and recovery to holiness by the new creating power of the Holy Spirit proclaims this humbling alarming truth: and a deep conviction of it is the only preparation of the heart for understanding, embracing, and valuing the Gospel. They, who are not thus humbled, count the preaching of the cross foolishness: and without thus preparing our way, ministers may preach even the love of Christ without effect: "For, every mouth must be stopped, and all "the world found guilty before God."

Thus condemned to everlasting punishment, without help or hope from ourselves, we stand on the brink of eternity. One after another is by death transmitted to the judgment-seat of God, and fixed in his eternal state. For, what the general judgment will be to the world at large, that, death proves to every individual. In the New Testament, the coming and day of the Lord are represented as at hand. Many ages have already elapsed, and many more shall doubtless yet succeed, before that grand and solemn scene; for the prophecies of scripture must needs be fulfilled. But what is that to individuals? The numerous inhabitants of the earth through all these succeeding

generations, already know and have entered upon, we soon shall know and enter upon, an eternal unchangeable state. The resurrection of the body, and the general judgment will complete the felicity or misery of that state, and display to the whole universe the glory of God therein. As then, death and judgment are so connected in reality, we cannot associate them too closely in our ideas and expectations. Meanwhile, being respited by the long-suffering of God, we are under a dispensation of mercy. Not the uncertain conjectures of reason, but authenticated revelation assures us, that God is merciful, and that "there is forgiveness with him." Mercy so rich and abundant, forgiveness so large, that no degree of guilt excludes the offender from sharing it.—Mercy and forgiveness exercised in a way far beyond, and even contrary to, all our conceptions and contrivances, but devised in his manifold wisdom; expressive of his perfect holiness; honourable to his righteous law; vindicating his awful justice; worthy of himself; calculated to stamp sin with eternal infamy; to humble and fill the pardoned sinner with admiring love and gratitude, and to produce and enlarge all holy affections in his soul.—"Without controversy great is this mys-"tery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh." "His name was called Emmanuel, God with us." "He was wounded for our transgressions, was bruis-"ed for our iniquities," "and suffered once for sins, "the just for the unjust," "that God might be just, "and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." "For herein is love, not that we loved God, but that

" he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation " for our sins."

Having, in this grand event, displayed in one view his infinite abhorrence of sin, and love of sinners, he can *now* honourably pardon and save all who accept of this salvation, and come unto God through him, who being risen from the dead, " ever liveth to make " intercession for us." This salvation the Lord proclaims in his word: " he commands all men every " where to repent," " he warms them to flee from " the wrath to come:" he instructs them " to flee " for refuge unto Jesus Christ by faith;" who invites " him that is athirst to come, and whosoever will, to " take of the water of life freely:" he exhorts the wicked to forsake his wickedness, and turn unto him; to " strive to enter in at the strait gate," and to use the means of grace: he engages " to give his Holy " Spirit to all who ask for him;" that the power of corruptions and evil habits, or temptations, may neither excuse him that despises, nor discourage him who desires, this salvation: he assures them, that Christ " will in no wise cast out him that cometh, " but that whosoever believeth shall be saved:" he allures them with exceeding great and precious " pro- " mises:" confirms them with the covenant and oath of God, " that they might have a strong consolation, " who flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set be- " fore them:" he counsels them " not to neglect such " great salvation, for how then can they escape?" and he tenderly expostulates with them; " As I live, saith " the LORD, I have no pleasure in the death of the " wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and

" live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why " will ye die?" Thus doth the Gospel address the sinner, propose salvation to him, urge his acceptance of it, and leave every one without excuse, " who will " not come unto Christ, that they may have life;" but through pride and worldly affections pour contempt on the wisdom, truth, and mercy of God.

The Lord waits to be gracious, and therefore he prolongs, according to his sovereign holy purposes, our lives from day to day. At length the appointed period arrives; the scene closes, and death fixes the final happiness or misery of every individual, according as he hath, or hath not, embraced this salvation; is, or is not, found ready.

Our situation in this world, and its connexion with eternity being thus ascertained, we perceive what that event is, for which we are to be ready. As rational and accountable creatures; as sinners guilty, polluted, and condemned; as dying, yet to live after death to all eternity, in the joys of heaven, or the torments of hell; as under a dispensation of mercy and grace, by which all things requisite are freely given for Christ's sake to every one that asketh for them; be ready, prepare to meet your God, your Creator, and Judge, whenever by death, he shall summon you into his presence.—We next enquire,

II. In what this readiness consists?

Surely it consists not in the acquisition or possession of wealth.—Yet numbers act as if this were the one thing needful: as if *they* had lived to good purpose and die happy, who *leave behind them*, fifty or a hundred thousand pounds! This grand object engros-

ses their thoughts, affections, time, and attention: to this all other pursuits are postponed, all other interests subordinated: for this the exercise of piety and charity must be contracted or neglected; too often justice disregarded. Six busy days afford no leisure for religious exercises, and transmit them jaded to the sabbath, as *their* day of relaxation and refreshment; or a day of weariness more intolerable than all the rest. "When will the sabbath be gone, that we may set "forth corn, making the shekel great, and the ephah "small, and falsifying the balances by deceit?"

"Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a "man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the "things that he possesseth:" neither the comfort, credit, usefulness, or length of it. Anxieties, suspicions, snares, and temptations alone, are multiplied with increasing wealth. "How hardly shall they that "have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven! It is "easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a nee-"dle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom "of heaven."—Men may express their astonishment at such declarations, as the disciples did, and exclaim, "Who then can be saved?" But the answer is put into our mouths, "The things which are impossible "with man are possible with God." Some, who are rich in the world, are also rich towards God; some with whom "riches increase, set not their hearts upon "them;" they are rich "in good works;" "and even "by their faithfulness in the *unrighteous mammon*," (in getting, keeping, and spending of which, men commit so much unrighteousness,) "they lay up trea-"sure in heaven." But comparatively these are but

few: and none who love and trust in riches, and expect an accession of felicity from increasing wealth, rather than from increasing holiness, can be in the way of salvation; "for if any man love the world, the love "of the Father is not in him." "And they that will "be rich" (being exposed through that covetous desire,) "fall into temptation, and a snare, and into di-"vers foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in "destruction and perdition:—"for the love of money "is the root of all evil."

Moreover riches, not being properly our own, but committed to our stewardship, not only do not ward off, or retard the stroke of death; but, when not faithfully improved, they render its approach in every respect unspeakably more formidable.—"Give an ac-"count of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no "longer steward." They who tenaciously keep possession of their riches, till death produces a reluctant separation, get little thanks from surviving heirs; who generally, in their turn, find them a pregnant source of jealousy, contention, and ill-will, and an occasion of additional sin and temptation.—A traveller, who approaches, in order to cross, the ocean, bowed down under a heavy burden of such things, as afford him neither present enjoyment nor prospect of future emolument, and as must very shortly be left behind upon the shore; and who assiduously and anxiously endeavours to increase his load; forms no unapt emblem of a character and conduct, but too commonly observable. I mean the character and conduct of such, as have already more than adds to enjoyment, nay, much that burdens them with solicitude, and be-

sets them with temptations and snares: who may very soon, and must ere long, leave all behind them for ever: and yet "there is no end of all their labour," in adding to their useless and troublesome abundance.—But can this be a rational conduct? a suitable preparation for a dying hour?—Yet is not this the very preparation many of you are making? Are you thus eagerly pursuing wealth? Exulting in your success, or murmuring under disappointment? Or, like the covetous man in this chapter, saying "Soul take "thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry, thou hast "goods laid up for many years?"—And now, should God say, "Thou fool, this night, thy soul shall be "required of thee:" the justice of the sentence and of the cutting rebuke, must be evident to your conscience; nor would your superfluous wealth prove the least source of comfort, or alleviation of your awful condition.

Neither was his preparation in the least degree better, "who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and "fared sumptuously every day;" who made choice of these for *his good* things, and looked for no higher pleasures. The luxury, the elegance, the pomp, and pride of life, which form so great a part of the business, conversation, ambition, and indulgence of those, who can, and those who cannot, afford them; however their doting admirers may defend their innocency, doubtless form a miserable preparation for a dying hour. Such an attention to animal gratification and external embellishment, prostitutes the affections, and debases the dignity of the rational and immortal soul: betrays a grovelling and trifling mind; and is utterly

inconsistent with the simplicity and spirituality of the christian religion. The wealth thus lavished (if creditors have not a claim to it,) demands a better improvement: the time ought to be redeemed to better purposes: and each professor of the gospel ought, by his example, to bear testimony against the prevailing extravagancy and folly of a luxurious, dissipated age and nation, and by no means to give a sanction to it. Nor can he, whose *satisfaction* lies in such things, point out any favourable distinction between *himself*, and that rich man, who lived thus splendidly and luxuriously, and when he died, "lifted up his eyes in "hell being in torments."—Yet are not even some present thus engaged? Are there not those among you, who are more eager to possess, and more ambitious to excel, and more afraid and ashamed to be outstript in, these things, than in righteousness and true holiness? Do not some spend twice the time about these baubles, that they do in secret devotion? Perhaps ten times the money, which they can afford for acts of charity? And is this the spirit, temper, and conduct of a christian? Let conscience determine, if it be not callous. Are these trifles? The world accounts them not so; for they sarcastically observe that *religious* people in *their* way, are as fond of the indulgences and distinctions of the world as others; which I am sure is no credit or "*adorning* to the doctrine of "God our Saviour."—I say, are not some thus conducting themselves? For I bless God, we have many honourable exceptions to the general depraved taste of the age. But, which of the two characters, (they whose care is to put on Christ, and to be adorned

with good works, and the beauties of holiness, whilst outward things are comparatively slighted; or they whose conduct is the very reverse,) do you suppose most ready for death and judgment? Should you choose to live as the latter, I am sure you will wish to die as the former. Oh, that men would think of these things! that they would "be wise, that they "would consider their latter end!"

Nor are the ambitious pursuits of greatness, power, or praise; or even the indefatigable labours of the learned, whilst Christ is rejected, and his gospel, (which is the wisdom of God,) undervalued and despised, in any respect a preferable preparation for a dying hour. Nor would any of you wish to receive the awful summons at the masquerade, the theatre, the opera, or the card-table. After all, which apologists have urged in behalf of such diversions, they cannot pretend that they are any part of that watchfulness, and readiness for the coming of the Lord, about which we are enquiring. They cannot say that in frequenting such amusements they are walking in the steps, and imitating the example, of Jesus Christ. Nor can they shew that in seeking relief from the *tediousness* of duty by such relaxation, they have that mind in them, which was in him, "whose *meat* it was to do the will of "God." Nor can they reconcile such diversions with these three precepts: "Be not conformed to this "world:" "Redeem your time:" "Whether ye eat, "or whether ye drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to "the glory of God." Make these precepts the rule of your conduct, delight yourselves in God, and pre-

pare to meet him in judgment; and you will have no more leisure or inclination for such vanities.

Permit me to add, that even moral decency of conversation, formal worship, or evangelical profession and notions, with various similar *religious* attainments, however men may rest in them, and value themselves upon them, come far short of the necessary preparation: "For except your righteousness exceed the "righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall "in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." But if all these things are improper, or inefficacious, what shall we think of the conduct of vast numbers, who are so far from being ready, or making diligent suitable preparation, that they are daily adding "drunken-"ness to thirst," and "sin to sin;" profaneness to debauchery, and infidelity to profaneness?

I hope your attention is not wearied, nor our enquiry interrupted, by this seeming digression not foreign, I trust, to the main subject. For by considering some of the most common ways in which men waste their lives, till death surprises them unprepared, and plunges them into irremediable misery; we may, to *more effect*, contrast that diligent, and constant, and earnest preparation, which the word of God enforces. This preparation, I apprehend, is twofold. A preparation by which the soul is secured; and a preparation by which that security is evidenced, improved, and rendered apparent for our comfort. Every true believer *habitually* possesses the former: when vigorously exercising grace, and diligently practising his duty, he *actually* enjoys the latter. We may, therefore, call the

former the *habitual*, the latter the *actual*, preparation for death and judgment.

1. Our precedent and introductory preparation, by which we become habitually safe, and therefore ready, consists in *acceptance* with God and *meetness* for heaven.

Having incurred the divine displeasure by transgression, the wrath of God must *abide* upon us, unless, or until, we obtain forgiveness.—If cut off by death without the pardon of our sins, that wrath must abide upon us for ever; for "the wicked is driven "away in his wickedness:" Nor will even the ransom of the death of Christ avail in this case. "Be- "ware lest he cut thee off with a stroke, and then a "great ransom cannot save thee."—On the other hand, "Blessed is that man, whose transgression is "forgiven, whose sin is covered, and to whom the "LORD imputeth not iniquity." How vile soever he hath heretofore been, he is now safe, and happy.—We have already seen whence this forgiveness springs; in what manner the way is opened for its honourable exercise; how it is proposed to all who hear the gospel, and how God with authority demands our acceptance of it. This is "the obedience "of faith," and Christ "is become the Author of "eternal salvation to all them that *obey* him." The man who truly believes the testimony of God in the sacred scriptures, concerning the Deity, the incarnation, humiliation, sufferings, death, resurrection, and mediatorial exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ; who perceives the necessity, the nature, and the glory of such an extraordinary expedient to render the salva-

tion of sinners consistent with the honour of the divine law, justice, and purity; who cordially approves of a salvation so humbling to man, and so honourable to God; who, as a sinner, is sincerely desirous to be saved from a deserved eternal condemnation, in this way; and who applies to, and trusts in, Christ alone for the pardon of his sins, the acceptance of his person, the sanctification of his heart, and the eternal salvation of his soul, through his merits, atonement, intercession, and grace:—This man, I say, "sets to his "seal that God is true," honours all the divine attributes, displayed in the Gospel, and is thus fully pardoned and justified, and shall be eternally saved. "He "shall not come into condemnation, but is passed "from death unto life." But he who does not believe this testimony; who rejects this salvation, as seeing no occasion for it, and no glory in it; and who either is careless about eternal things, or seeks acceptance in ways of man's devising, and more suited to his pride, makes God a liar, pours contempt on every divine attribute, defies his justice, despises his grace, and affronts his manifold wisdom, which angels behold and adore, in the church purchased with Emmanuel's blood. But it is to his own loss; for thus he seals and aggravates his own condemnation.

As unbelief is always accompanied with impenitency; so faith springs only from a penitent heart. "Therefore repentance towards God, and faith to- "wards our Lord Jesus Christ," comprise the conduct, character, and experience of the sinner, who seeks salvation in the acceptable method. That blessed Spirit, who applies to the soul the salvation,

which flows from the love of the Father, through the atonement of the Saviour's blood, (that glory may be to God the Father, Son, and Spirit for ever,) begins the work by "convincing us of sin." Illuminating the mind to perceive in some degree the glorious character and perfect law of God, he shews us proportionably the odiousness of sin, and the vileness of our conduct and character; and produces a disposition to abhor sin, and abase and condemn ourselves as sinners: while he convinces us that justice is armed against us, and undeserved mercy our only refuge. When the mind is thus in some degree prepared for the discovery, we are led to consider the truths of the Gospel, and to see something of their nature and glory, which before were hid from us. In proportion as we, with enlightened minds, under the influences of the Spirit of truth, look to the cross of Christ, we are made more sensible of the demerit and hatefulness of sin, of our own guilt and depravity, and of the sinfulness even of our best performances. This effectually deprives us of all hopes of being saved in any other way, and inspires us with ardent desires, and with expectations, of being saved in and by the Lord Jesus Christ.—Thus we are led to seek salvation, where it may be found; to use the means which God hath appointed; to wait with patient expectation, though tried by delays and discouragements (for we have now no where else to go, and are consciously unworthy of every favour;) to long and pray for faith; to be willing to leave all worldly interests and pleasures for Christ, and count them but loss and dung; to examine anxiously what is wrong in our manner of coming to

Christ; and what in our conduct or dependence, excludes us from the tokens of his love, in which others rejoice; and still with greater earnestness to use the means of grace, to watch against the approach of sin, to attend to our duty; yet still to grow more jealous of our hearts, lest we should trust in any thing but free mercy through Christ alone. When the soul is thus humbled, and weaned from other dependences, and prepared to make a good use of encouragement: favour will be bestowed, and then the believer, "abounding in hope through the power of the Holy "Ghost," learns to rejoice in forgiveness of sins.

Other kinds of experience, and faith, and confidence, and joy, may be separated from the "meet-"ness of the inheritance of the saints in light;" but this cannot.—They who despise spiritual blessings, and have an aversion to spiritual occupations and holy company, cannot be fit for the society and employment of heaven. The proud and ambitious, the luxurious, and dissipated, and covetous, the envious and malicious, could find nothing there suited to their disposition, or capable of affording them satisfaction: They are not only condemned, but they are also "vessels of wrath, *fitted* for destruction." "Ye "must be born again."—But when, through this gracious change, we become capable of perceiving the glory, loving the excellency, and relishing the pleasure to be found in spiritual things: when spiritual blessings are supremely valued, spiritual exercises delighted in, religious society sought after: when sin is abhorred, the world despised, Christ become precious, righteousness hungered and thirsted after; the hum-

bling salvation of the Gospel cordially approved and embraced, and its holy precepts chosen, and the whole glory given unto the Lord; then we are evidently fitted for the society, worship, and employments of those holy spirits, who with exalted love and gratitude, are giving glory to God and to the Lamb for ever.

But even of these very persons, who "have been "thus turned from darkness unto light, and from the "power of Satan unto God;" who "have received "forgiveness of sins," and are both entitled to, and "meet for an inheritance amongst all them who are "sanctified," some live in a more strict and constant course of consequent preparation than others; and the same persons more at one season than at another.

There are seasons when in some measure we are all too anxious about worldly things, and entangled by them; when we are betrayed into wrong tempers, or inexpedient indulgences; when we are comparatively unwatchful, lifeless, and negligent in our attendance upon publick ordinances, or secret devotion.—At such times, though, *as believers*, we *habitually* possess a readiness; yet in another sense we are not ready, "our loins are not girded," "we are not "as servants waiting for the coming of our LORD:" and his approach would startle us, excite perplexing doubts and gloomy apprehensions, and fill us with perplexity and remorse.

Contrasted with this unwatchfulness, is that tenour of conduct and frame of spirit, which forms our *actual* readiness. When the believer daily examines himself both respecting his state, conduct, growth in

grace, and victory over sinful habits and passions; when he constantly and impartially reviews whatever occupies his thoughts, or engages his affections; whatever relates to the regulation of his appetites and passions, his tempers and conversation; whatever passes in publick or in private, in his closet or family, in his business, in company, or in the house of God; when he judges himself and scrutinizes his own conduct with scrupulous exactness, keeps his heart with all diligence, and without reserve confesses humbly before God every thing that he but suspects hath been amiss; seeking forgiveness expressly through the blood of Christ: when in the exercise of repentance and faith, by continual earnest prayer, seeking the invigorating influences of the Holy Spirit, he is daily employed in striving against sin; in mortifying the deeds of the body; in opposing especially his strongest enemy, his own constitutional or customary iniquity; and in aspiring after a more entire victory over the world, an increase of spiritual affections, and a conversation more becoming the Gospel of Christ.—When a Christian is actually thus "setting his affec-"tions on things above, not on things on the earth," in a believing prospect of approaching dissolution, and its important consequences, he is indeed "ready for "the coming of his expected Lord."

"The Son of man is as a man taking a far jour-"ney, who left his house, and gave authority to his "servants, and to every man his work."*—Every Christian is the servant of Jesus Christ: Every ser-

* Mark xiii. 34.

vant has his place, his work, his talents. In filling up that place, doing that work, and improving those talents, wisely, faithfully, and diligently, do we approve ourselves his servants, and best prepare for his coming.—The minister's work is to "preach the word "instant in season and out of season." A few (like David, Daniel, and Nehemiah) are called to serve God and their generation, in the exercise of civil power and authority. These are doing their work, when they assiduously and conscientiously improve their exalted station, for the promotion of religion, the welfare of society, and the happiness of mankind. The employment of the rich is to do good with their abundance, by alleviating the miseries, increasing the comforts, and discountenancing the wickedness, of all around them, as much as possible.—Those who have not such abundance, may find their work in less expensive, but more self-denying and not less acceptable, instances of kindness to the distressed, (as Tabitha, in "making coats and garments for the poor.") The poor themselves may serve Christ by diligence, frugality, honesty, cheerful contentment, and a humble respectful deportment to their superiors. The man who is employed in commercial dealings, will find his proper service to our common Lord, in a line of conduct strongly marked with integrity, removed at a distance from the appearance and plausible suspicion of avarice, fraud, and oppression; by "render-"ing to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to "God the things that are God's;" and by laying out upon the needy, according as God hath prospered him.——In short, every situation in society, or in re-

lative life, has its peculiar duties, and affords peculiar occasions of serving God, adorning religion, and doing good to mankind. In understanding and doing our own proper work with quietness and cheerfulness, not envying those above, nor despising those beneath us, nor intermeddling with another's work, nor quarrelling with our fellow-servants; but disinterestedly, in our proper place, serving the common cause of God and his church with universal conscientiousness and watchfulness, do we best prepare for the coming of our Lord.—And whatever his employment be, "blessed is that servant, whom his Lord "when he cometh shall find so doing."

III. I would propose some conclusive arguments, which prove the necessity of our being always ready.

Were we required to be ready for an event, which might, or might not, take place, our negligence might admit of some excuse—but "it is appointed unto "men once to die, and after death the judgment." That event for which we are thus assiduously to prepare, is of known and acknowledged certainty; whilst all other future events and emergencies, about which we are anxious, and for which we are making provision, are totally uncertain; and whilst we are taking care for many years, we may never live to see many days. Can we then act reasonably, if we provide so carefully and laboriously for an uncertainty, and bestow no pains to provide for an undisputed certainty?

2. Death to individuals, and judgment to the world, will not only *certainly* arrive, but when the most of men never expect them. "When they say peace "and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon

" them as travail upon a woman with child, and they " shall not escape." " For the day of the Lord will " come as a thief in the night."—The appointed hour of death is kept from each of us, in impenetrable secresy; not only beyond our discovery, but even our probable conjecture. Death is all around us, indiscriminately, preying upon tender infancy, blooming youth, vigorous manhood, and decrepit old age. The feeble linger on, the robust are hurried away. Wasting sickness, or hoary hairs warn a few of approaching dissolution, who yet seldom profit by the warning: more are cut off without previous notice.—A fall, a blow, a robber, a nocturnal conflagration, or some of the innumerable unforeseen appointments of God, which men call accidents, hurry multitudes from vigorous health, eager pursuits, and sanguine expectations, to meet their Judge, and hear their doom. One drops by an apoplexy; another is seized by madness; and a third by a fever and delirium, who raves a few days, and dies. Like a field of battle, they fall on the right hand and on the left: we are hitherto wonderfully preserved; but at what hour, or by what stroke, a Sovereign God may cut us off, we know not, nor can we conjecture. Is it not reasonable that we should be always ready?

3. Should a sudden calamity deprive us of all earthly comforts, we might hope for a favourable reverse to reinstate us in prosperity: or the favour of God, and the hope and earnest of heaven might silence our complaints, and brighten our prospect. But if unexpected death cut us off unprepared, our opportunity is eternally lost, our hope has given up the

ghost, and the blackness of darkness bounds the dreary prospect for ever. Surely we have reason enough to prepare for a decision, which may take place this hour; which once passed can never be reversed; and on which the interests of eternity depend. Assuredly it would be irrational to run the hazard of a miscarriage for one moment, though in that moment we could secure the empire of the universe? "For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole "world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man "give in exchange for his soul?"—Yet are not some present convicted of their own consciences, that they are hazarding all these irreversible and awful consequences, by procrastinating in the concerns of their souls from month to month, and year to year, for the sake of such things as are most trifling and transitory? And is this the conduct of *rational* creatures!

4. Were that happiness, or misery, which the Bible reveals, though eternal, yet imperfect and mixed; this might somewhat account for the infatuation of leaving the event in suspense, till some craving lust was gratified. But the whole extent and force of human language is employed, and labours, and is exhausted, in representing the absolute and unmixed felicity of heaven, and misery of hell. All that man is, or ever shall become, capable of enjoying, and consequently all that God can bestow upon him: and all that his powerful wrath can inflict on the immortal spirit and incorruptible body to eternity, are now depending: the important decision is at hand.—Need I say, Be ready? I need not, if men's eyes were not blinded by the god of this world.

5. Even our comfortable enjoyment of life greatly depends on being prepared for death.—Who can relish the feeble pleasure, which temporal things are capable of communicating, with this thought corroding his heart: 'I may die this night, this hour: I am to-'tally unprepared: 'tis therefore possible that before 'another hour I may lift up mine eyes in hell?' And though more pleasing and welcome thoughts commonly thrust out this salutary reflection; yet it will sometimes intrude even in the vigour of health, in the midst of company, and in scenes of mirth and dissipation: like some dire spectre, however, it will be sure to haunt the hour of distress, and the bed of sickness, or to mingle with whatever reminds us of death and judgment. But how must it enhance our comforts, and mitigate our sorrows, and deliver us from the fear of death, to "know that when this earthly house of "our tabernacle shall be dissolved, we have a build-"ing of God, an house not made with hands, eternal "in the heavens!"

6. Nor can our judgment of our situation in reference to eternal things, fail to have a powerful influence on our conduct. He, who judges, or fears that he is unfit for death; yet neglects, or postpones a thorough preparation, must and will shun solitude and reflection, and endeavour to silence the voice of conscience. Hence perpetual hurry of business, or diversions: hence, when these are found too feeble, effectually to free him from the torment of thinking, he takes refuge in debauchery, or infidelity. Thus guilt accumulates, and wrath is treasured up against "the "day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judg-

" ment of God." But the well grounded hope of salvation arms the soul as with an helmet; keeps it steady as an anchor; inspires courage and resolution to labour, venture, and suffer for Christ; infuses sweetness into religious exercises; and renders the soul, " stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work " of the Lord, as knowing that his labour is not in " vain in the Lord."

7. Finally, at the approach of death many have grievously lamented the neglect of preparation; none ever lamented having been too diligent in preparing. Many have lamented their inattention to the gospel, to the means of grace, and to the concerns of eternity; but none ever at that time lament, that they have missed opportunities of gratifying their appetites, frequenting amusements, and taking worldly pleasure. Pious christians often mourn, at that solemn period, lost opportunities for service, unimproved talents, unfruitfulness, and negligence: but none regret having renounced the world, denied themselves, born their cross, laboured for Christ, and minded the one thing needful. When standing on the verge of both worlds, if not before, men begin to form a more proper estimate of their comparative value. Let us profit by their judgment; and *now* employ ourselves, as they wish they had, or rejoice that they did: then shall we indeed be ready also.

I am persuaded, brethren, that many of you have all along perceived, that I chose this subject with reference to the death of the late Dr. Conyers, of Deptford, an honoured, able, and useful minister of the gospel.—From authentick information you will probably

be gratified and edified ere long, with a variety of interesting particulars respecting his character, life, and death. But this is not my province: it is enough for my purpose to observe, that last Lord's day morning he was so far in health, as to perform the service,* in his parish church.—In the second lesson (which was the xxth chapter of Acts) having solemnly pronounced the words—" and now I know that all ye among " whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, " shall see my face no more:—Wherefore I take you " to record, that I am pure from the blood of all " men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all " the counsel of God:" He paused; applied the words to his own ministry among those present: and appealed to their consciences, that he had thus discharged his trust and was pure from their blood, whatever might be their present conduct, or their future doom. Then he proceeded, preached, concluded, or was concluding, the blessing, when he was suddenly taken ill, and (not to dwell on circumstances not fully authenticated) died before three o'clock that afternoon! Without doubt this event was to him inexpressibly glorious and joyful. If we except the case of those, who concluded and sealed their testimony with their blood shed in confirmation of the truth they preached; we cannot conceive a minister dying more in character, or more honourably. Like a soldier sword in hand, valiantly defending his country. " Let me die the " death of the righteous and let my latter end be like

* All but the Communion Service, which was read by his Curate.

"*his.*" "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord "when he cometh shall find *so* doing."

But had it been your case—Should death single out you, before you leave this place of worship—What would be the consequence? The providence of God joins issue with his word, and loudly proclaims, "Be "ye ready also." And are you ready? Do you start? Does conscience declare the contrary? What an awful situation had you now been in, had the God, in whose hand is your life, called you instead of his ready servant! Oh ye gay, ye thoughtless, ye who are dreaming vain dreams of earthly felicity, on the very verge of eternal misery, pause, reflect—"Let your laughter "be turned into mourning, and your joy into heavi- "ness." "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from "the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." "Let "the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man "his thoughts, and let him return unto the LORD, "and he will (yet) have mercy upon him, and to our "God, and he will abundantly pardon." But it must be without delay: "you must seek the LORD while "he may be found." "Behold *now* is the accepted "time! Behold *now* is the day of salvation! Therefore "*to-day*, if ye will hear his voice harden not your "hearts" lest to-morrow should be too late, "and he should swear in his wrath, that you should never en- "ter into his rest." And you must address yourselves to this business with all earnestness; "Strive to enter "in at the strait gate; for many will seek to enter in, and "shall not be able;" "When once the Master of the "house hath risen up, and hath shut to the door; and "*ye* begin to stand without, and knock, saying, Lord,

"Lord, open to us, and he shall answer, and say un-
"to you, I know ye not whence ye are—then shall
"be weeping, and gnashing of teeth." That this may not be your case, return home, I beseech you, retire, and on your bended knees, supplicate him, who is yet on a throne of grace, and exalted to give repentance and forgiveness of sins, to prepare your souls for meeting him shortly upon his judgment-seat.

But, my brethren, as you value your immortal souls, do not rest satisfied with a mere profession, or a hope grounded upon some general convictions of sin, approbation of evangelical truth, encouragement received under the word, or the good opinion of christians and ministers. Remember the foolish virgins: they had the lamp of profession, were admitted to the company of the wise virgins, and continued undetected in it; yet had they not the oil of true grace. They had a religion, which satisfied others, and *themselves*, till "the coming of the LORD;" but utterly failed when they had most occasion for it, and left them in outer and eternal darkness.—Oh, examine yourselves, and beg of God to examine you, and shew you whether you have scriptural evidence that your sins are forgiven, and your hearts changed by divine grace. That man only, who, abiding in Christ, and looking to him daily, learns to abhor all sin, to love and long after all holiness, to despise the world, and to seek his comfort here, as well as hope of heaven hereafter, from the exercise of grace, and the performance of his duty, will when Christ shall appear, have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at

his coming. In this way therefore "give all dili-
"gence to make your calling and election sure; for
"if ye do these things ye shall never fall; but so an en-
"trance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the
"everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus
"Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind."*

And, my christian brethren, let us make it our business "to have our loins girded, and our lamps "burning, and be like men, who are waiting for the "coming of their LORD." Let us watch and labour each in his place and post. Now is the time to do something for the cause of God on earth, among sinners: "The night is coming wherein no man can "work." According to the advice of Solomon, "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all "thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor "knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou "goest."†—"Having then gifts differing according "to the grace that is given unto us: whether prophe-"cy, let us prophecy according to the proportion of "faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or "he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on "exhortation. He that giveth, let him do it with "simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that "sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be "without dissimulation—abhor that which is evil; "cleave to that which is good,"‡ &c. In this way let us daily make preparation for death: and then we need not perplex ourselves with distrustful apprehensions about it: our God will order every circumstance

---

* 2 Peter i. 12, 13. † Eccl. ix. 10. ‡ Rom. xii.

relating to our closing scene, as shall be most for his glory, the edification of others, and our own comfort and advantage: he can, and we may trust he will, illuminate the gloomy valley, and make even the king of terrors wear a smile.

And as the Lord is depriving his church of those, who have been faithful and useful, pray for us, my brethren, who remain, that we may thus preach, labour, live, and die. And finally, let us all join in earnestly "praying the Lord of the harvest to send "forth labourers into his harvest." Amen, Amen.

The love of Christ the source of genuine Philanthropy.

A

DISCOURSE

ON 2 COR. V. 14, 15.

Occasioned by

THE DEATH OF JOHN THORNTON, ESQ.

LATE OF CLAPHAM, SURRY:

CONTAINING

OBSERVATIONS ON HIS CHARACTER AND PRINCIPLES.

SERMON II.

2 COR. V. 14, 15.

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, they were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him, which died for them, and rose again.

THE character of the apostle Paul exhibits so many excellencies, that most professed christians have admired, or affected to admire it. His piety, zeal, philanthropy, disinterestedness, patience, meekness, and fortitude, have perhaps never been equalled by any mere man: yet his principles were by no means fully understood by his contemporaries; and there appeared such singularities in his conduct, that he was sometimes compelled to apologize for himself, and for the exuberance of his zeal, even to christians, nay, to those who had been converted by his ministry. Thus, in the verse preceding the text, he says, "Whether "we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we "be sober, it is for your cause:" and then he adds,

" For the love of Christ constraineth us," &c. Here then he informs us, that the whole drift and tenour of his conduct, whether it appeared to them wise and excellent, or whether they deemed it strange and extravagant, proceeded from this single principle, " The " love of Christ," which even " constrained him to " live no longer to himself, but to him who died for " him, and rose again."

The death and resurrection of Christ, with the benefits and instructions which he thence derived, gave a new direction to his conduct, and this extraordinary turn to his whole character.

The consideration of his former lost condition, the assurance of his deliverance, the astonishing price that the Saviour had paid for his redemption, and the joyful hope of everlasting life, produced admiring love and ardent gratitude, in some measure proportionate to his obligations, and impelled him with invincible energy to devote himself and all his powers to the active service of his divine Benefactor. And his judgment concerning the ruined condition of his fellow creatures, and the privileges and obligations of his christian brethren; his zeal for the honour of the Saviour, and his love to the souls of men, rendered him superior to all concern about the effects which his conduct might have on his interest, reputation, ease, liberty, or even life itself.

Such was St. Paul: " the love of Christ constrain- " ed him," and this ruling principle animated him to abound and persevere in every good work, to face every danger, and to surmount every obstacle, which he met with in his course.

It is not, however, the design of this Discourse to enter more fully into the principles from which St. Paul acted, or to treat directly on the doctrines contained in the text: but rather thence to take occasion to make some observations on the character of a person, eminent in the religious world, who is lately deceased. The situation indeed, which the character referred to filled in society, was very different from that of the apostle; so that in this and many other circumstances no parallel can be drawn between them: yet we may confidently say that, like St. Paul, the habitual tenour of his conduct, during a great part of life, was actuated by the constraining love of Christ.

In prosecuring this design, I purpose,

I. To point out some of the most striking peculiarities in the character to be considered;

II. To advert to some of those religious principles, that gave rise to this peculiarity of character and conduct; and

III. To shew that the same principles, wherever they really exist, must of course produce the same effects according to a man's situation and circumstances.

In treating of the character of him, whose lamented death and honoured memory gave occasion to this Discourse, it is peculiarly proper that we should mention, what we are sure no man will dispute, namely,

I. That he was distinguished by his great liberality: that he disposed of very large sums in various charitable designs, with an unremitting constancy, during a long course of years: and that his charities were much larger, than what is common with wealthy per-

sons of reputation for beneficence; insomuch, that he was rather regarded as a prodigy, which might excite astonishment, than as an example, that other men of equal affluence were in duty bound to imitate: and yet it is apprehended, that his character hath not been in this respect over-stated, and that few persons were acquainted with the full extent of his charities.

In respect to this leading circumstance, we must advert to several particulars.

1. In dispensing his bounty it is well known, that he constantly aimed to promote the knowledge and practice of the religion contained in the Bible, and to bring the careless, the ignorant, the profane, and the profligate, to attend to the concerns of their souls, "to repent and turn to God, and to do works meet "for repentance." For this purpose also he was the general patron of pious, exemplary, and laborious ministers of the gospel; frequently educating young men, whom he found to be religiously disposed; and purchasing many livings, not so much with a view of benefiting the individuals to whom he gave them, as for the sake of planting useful ministers of the gospel in those parts, where he supposed the people to be "perishing for lack of knowledge."

He also dispersed a very great number of Bibles, in different languages, in distant countries, perhaps even in all the four quarters of the globe; and with them vast quantities of such books as he thought most suited to awaken the conscience, to affect the heart with a sense of the importance of eternal things, and to lead men to repentance, faith in Christ, and holiness of life; thus labouring to render those, whom

he never saw, wise unto salvation: and no doubt numbers will for ever bless God for these his pious and charitable endeavours.

But though his liberality had this for its grand object, yet it was by no means conducted on an exclusive principle. He aimed to adorn and recommend, as well as to spread, the religion which he professed, and to shew its genuine tendency in his own conduct towards all men. In subserviency to this design, and from the most enlarged and expanded philanthropy, he supported and patronized every undertaking, which was suited to supply the wants, to relieve the distresses, or to increase the comforts of any of the human species, in whatever climate, or of whatever description; provided it properly fell within his sphere of action. Indeed, there was scarcely any publick or private charity, *of evident utility*, to which he was not, at one time or other, in some measure a benefactor. So that he plainly observed the command, "to "do good to all men, especially to them that are of "the household of faith."

And here it should especially be noted, that his beneficence was not always withheld, even on account of the extreme wickedness of those, who were to receive the advantage of it: but that he was guided, in this respect, by the prospect of doing them good, either in respect of their temporal or eternal welfare; as might be abundantly proved, were it necessary, by many striking instances. This, with kindness to enemies, forms a distinguishing feature in the christian character, and can only be produced by those principles, which we shall hereafter consider. And

though this peculiarity is here only just hinted at: yet it is hoped, it will be carefully considered, being of great importance, in order to a right understanding of the subject of this discourse.

It is in the next place worthy of observation, that this friend of mankind, in the exercise of his beneficence, not only contributed his money, (which often is done to very little purpose,) but he devoted his time and thoughts very much to the same object: doing good was the great business of his life, and may more properly be said to have been his occupation, than even his mercantile engagements, which were uniformly considered as subservient to that nobler design.

To form and execute plans of usefulness; to superintend, arrange, and improve upon those plans; to lay aside such as did not answer, and to substitute others in their place; to form acquaintance, and collect intelligence for this purpose; to select proper agents, and to carry on correspondence, in order to ascertain that his bounties were well applied: these and similar concerns, were the hourly occupations of his life, and the ends of living which he proposed to himself; nor did he think that any part of his time was spent either happily, or innocently, if it were not in some way instrumental, directly or indirectly, to the furtherance of useful designs. Admitting therefore, that this was his plan of life, (which is in fact indisputable;) and that the means he used were scriptural, and proper, it must follow that the sum total of good which he did to mankind, by persevering in these habits during many years, must exceed all computa-

tion, and can only be ascertained at the great day of account and retribution.

As a proof how much his business was rendered subservient to his beneficence, it may be remarked, that he not only made the gains of his commerce, in a great degree, a fund for the support of his charity; but his commerce itself was often an introduction to the knowledge of the wants, calamities, and deplorable condition, of mankind in distant regions of the earth; and a medium, through which to communicate to their necessities; and to circulate among them the word of God, and other means of instruction, for the benefit of their immortal souls.

To support such numerous and expensive designs of usefulness, without embarrassing his affairs, or interfering with the real interests of his family, he observed a strict frugality in his expences. It was not necessary for him to live in that style, which those that are distinguished by titles, or high offices, deem requisite to their rank and character; and he had no relish for parade and magnificence: thus his very hospitable, but simple, manner of life, left a large surplus out of his income, the chief part of which constantly flowed into the channel of his beneficence: and having tasted the delight of doing good, and finding it "more "blessed to give than to receive," or to expend in any other way, he abounded in it with increasing satisfaction. At the same time the God of truth verified to him his word, which saith, "there is that "scattereth and yet increaseth;" for, so far from being impoverished by his extraordinary liberality; his estate was considerably augmented, with the fairest

character for integrity and probity; his children are amply provided for, and reflect with greater satisfaction on the sums, that their honoured father expended in doing good, than even on those, by which he hath left it in their power to emulate his example.

Frugality like this, is worthy of our most attentive and serious consideration. In fact it laid the foundation of his extraordinary liberality; and the want of it, perhaps even more than a defect in benevolence, is what so much contracts men's ordinary scale of doing good. Strict œconomy on the one hand and profuse bounty on the other, are qualities which seldom unite in one character, nor is it reasonable to expect that they should. The man of benevolence, being afraid of avarice, is commonly free in his own expences: thus his wealth is pre-occupied; and though his heart may be large, yet his means are found inadequate. On the other hand, the œconomist, who reserves a fund that might be sufficient for the execution of the largest designs of beneficence, commonly takes too much delight in accumulating, to part with his wealth by proportionate liberality. To be plain, frugal, and self-denying in all matters of private expence, and yet liberal in supplying the wants of others, is a combination of different excellencies in one character, which will seldom be found, except where true christian principles possess and govern the heart. In this case, habitual moderation and expanded benevolence, grow from the same root; and where the person, in whom they unite, is in affluent circumstances, they cannot fail of producing such effects as we have been considering.

Indeed it may be added, that the expences, even of benevolent men, are so much governed by the fashions and customs of the world, that they are greatly cramped in following the dictates of their own hearts. But the excellency of religion appears conspicuous in this also: for it releases men from this servile subjection to the humours and opinions of mankind, and forbids the usual emulation in superfluous expence. Thus it supplies a fund, whereby that spirit of philanthropy, which true piety always increases, may be largely gratified: and which being once gratified, will seldom fail to become still more expansive.

2. Having made these observations upon the most publick and popular part of the character which we are contemplating; I would mention, as a second peculiarity, his exact attention to religious duties. Men of light and inconsiderate minds are apt to conceive, that such strictness has little or no connexion with the exercise of beneficence; not knowing that the love of God, which induces to, and is advanced by, these devotional exercises, when practised without formality or hypocrisy, always promotes, in a proportionable degree, the love of our neighbour also. That excellent person, however, whose decease gave occasion to this discourse, spent much of his time, especially during the latter part of his life, in retirement and religious duties: the Lord's day was appropriated to these uses, and entirely rescued from the avocations of ceremonious visits, and even of common hospitality. He found much pleasure in publick worship and in family-religion: and therefore it is not surprising, that having once contracted those habits, which seem stiff and singu-

lar at the first; he should afterwards adhere to them, when he found that they tended to improve his heart, to establish his faith, to promote the enjoyment of life, and to comfort him in his declining years, and in the prospect of his approaching dissolution. Nor could it be expected, that he, who employed himself so much in distributing Bibles, and in propagating christianity in distant nations, should neglect the religious instruction of his own household; or should endure that those habits of irreligion, which are so generally disregarded in servants, should be contracted and continued in his own view, and within the sphere of his own immediate influence.

He was also exact and punctual in the private exercises of the closet: he daily read the sacred scriptures with great reverence and attention; and he adhered to rules; which he had formed for himself, from a deliberate consideration of their importance; but, at the same time, he avoided observation, or the affectation of austerity. His meals were early, regular, and temperate; and his life retired, when compared with that of most men, in the same situation in society. He was entirely a stranger to the ordinary pleasures and amusements of the world, nor was he accustomed in any particular to consult his own ease or indulgence, yet his cheerfulness was noticed by all who conversed with him, and he habitually appeared well satisfied and happy. His fear of alienating his time from more important uses, rendered him, on some occasions, *apparently* too averse to go into almost any company. But where the motive was so good, and the use made of time, thus redeemed, was so worthy of imitation,

surely this may be mentioned to his commendation, rather than as a failing; especially, as it increased only with his advancing years, and evidenced a mind more and more occupied with the thoughts of that blessed world, into which he expected soon to be removed.

3. His unaffected and deep humility may be considered as another distinguishing feature of his character. His liberality, his useful industry, and his piety; though he was zealous and abundant in them all, appeared not to himself in any degree meritorious: nay, he was convinced, that in every respect, he fell short of his bounden duty, and was entirely dependent on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus for the pardon of his sins, and for final acceptance and felicity.—In truth, he estimated his own character and conduct, by comparing them with the straight rule of the divine law, and not with the crooked principles, and practices of the world. For he considered himself and all the race of men, as being naturally in a state of apostacy from God, and exceedingly prone to evil; and he was very earnest in spreading this opinion, as a fundamental doctrine of the Scriptures.

This sentiment, as far as it was applied to himself, will be admitted to have been a source of humility; when applied to others, it is sometimes thought to be of a contrary nature; for a conviction of the general depravity of the human race, is frequently imagined to spring either from spiritual pride, or from a harsh and severe disposition.

Now, as the sentiments, entertained by our late honoured friend, concerning the fallen state of the world around him, undoubtedly made a material part of his

character, I shall enter more fully into this circumstance; and the candid reader will then judge, how far this persuasion was consistent with the general benevolence of his character.

The ground, on which this and the rest of his religious opinions were founded, was the plain declarations of the Bible: and to that book, which he studied day by day, I must refer the reader for a fuller explanation of the subject.—Our late friend, I say, implicitly believed the doctrines of it; and, conscious of his own demerit, all his hopes of salvation were derived from it: he expected "eternal life, as the gift of God "through Jesus Christ," according to the revelation of mercy, and the precious promises contained in the Scriptures; and he found that these were matters, in which human reason or authority could give him no assurance or satisfaction.—If then, on the one hand, he believed the promises of the Bible, and derived all his consolation from them, how could he disbelieve the threatenings of God contained in the same book, and the repeated declarations of the inspired writers, concerning the degeneracy of men, the wickedness of the world, and the comparative small number of those who are in the way of salvation?

Indeed, that kind of charity, which we often hear pleaded for, can only be expected, from Infidels and Scepticks, who, consistently with their principles, may deny that there is a hell, or that the way is broad and thronged which leads to it. But in proportion as these sentiments prevail, the sinews will be cut of every effort, to bring sinners into that narrow way of repentance, faith, and holiness, in which the word of God requires them to

walk.—If any, therefore, who would be thought to believe the Bible, sooth their worldly neighbours with unscriptural hopes, or teach them to make light of their danger; it must be owing, (though they may not suspect it,) to no small degree of scepticism mixing with their views of Christianity. And it is difficult to conceive how *they* can derive any actual hope from the Gospel, who discard all serious fear, and who neither lament nor perceive that state of condemnation, under which, (according to the word of God) is every one around them; unless he believe in Christ Jesus, be renewed in the spirit of his mind, and lead a sober, righteous, and godly life; or, at least be striving to enter in at the strait gate of repentance and conversion to God and holiness. It is observable, that the Scriptures seem to know but of two descriptions of men, namely, those who serve God, and those who serve him not: he who is not the servant of God, but serves some other master, or aims at some other end, lies under the condemnation of the Bible, though he be free from disreputable vices: and whether the multitude around us are in good earnest serving God, or whether they are pursuing their own selfish ends, let any man of common observation determine.

It must therefore, appear to every candid enquirer, that when religious persons entertain, what are called *uncharitable* opinions of their neighbours, they are in truth compelled to it by the united evidence of facts and scripture; and not inclined to it by a mere conceit of their own superiority, or any severity of disposition.

These sentiments may often be observed, as in the

present instance, to reside in the same breast, with the most tender compassion, the most expanded benevolence, and the most unequivocal tokens of deep humility. It is not then an inconsistency, to think mankind very corrupt and wicked, and yet to abound in compassion and charity towards them. This evidently accords to the judgment and conduct of God himself, as it is every where represented in scripture: "He commended his love to us, in that "when we were sinners," "ungodly, and enemies," "Christ died for us." The blessed Saviour was hated for "testifying of the world that the works "thereof were evil;" yet "he went about doing "good," and at length laid down his life, as "the "propitiation for our sins." St. John, the beloved disciple, who was eminent for the greatness of his charity, says, "We know that we are of God, and "that the whole world lieth in wickedness:" and St. Paul, with a mixture of sound judgment and genuine charity, says to the Philippians, "There are many of "whom I have told you often, and now tell you even "weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of "Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is "their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who "mind earthly things." These are a few passages, out of vast numbers that might be produced: and it may be added, that the world, (signifying the generality of mankind,) is scarcely ever mentioned in scripture, without something being added, which implies a condemnation of it.

It is obvious that these sentiments cannot but be *unfashionable and unpopular;* and must exceedingly

deduct from the character of every religious man, in the opinion of the world, how much soever he lays himself out, in doing good to the bodies, and souls of his fellow creatures.

Numbers indeed are not aware, that they, who believe the Bible, do thus in their judgment condemn the world around them; and they can therefore bear with many true Christians, on account of their philanthropy, having never approached near enough to understand this unpopular subject. It is proper, that such persons should be undeceived, and should know, that every one who believes the word of God, however kind and obliging to them, entertains the most serious apprehensions concerning the state of their souls, and is far more alarmed for them, than they are for themselves. There are also others, who have some sense of religion, and secretly assent to this offensive doctrine; but, joining much with the world, they deem it convenient to disguise their sentiments. Nay, they frequently behave in a manner so inconsistent with a serious conviction of this awful truth, that they are never suspected; they conform to the world, and seem to be a constituent part of it; and who could imagine, that they join with the scripture in condemning it? These are indeed the more popular characters; yet if their sentiments were fully known, perhaps they would meet with less favour, than they who profess their opinions without disguise, and separate from the pleasures and vanities of the world, and from a needless intercourse with it upon that account.—The latter are certainly the more honest men, and would probably, if the whole truth

were known, be deemed the more honourable characters, the people of the world themselves being judges.

It is not, however, here meant to be insinuated, that pious persons never form too harsh a judgment concerning their neighbours. A certain precipitancy of temper, and a vehemence about points of doctrine, or a contracted acquaintance with some sect or party, often betray them into mistakes of this kind. Yet whilst we censure a seeming want of charity in others, we should be careful not to fall into real uncharitableness ourselves: and not to condemn any religious persons, merely for abiding by the standard of the Bible; lest we should be guilty of condemning the Bible itself, while we are fondly valuing ourselves on our superior christian charity.

But the person of whom we speak, though attached to the church of England, both in respect of its genuine doctrine, worship, and discipline, was equally a cordial friend to pious persons among the dissenters: though, undoubtedly, his more intimate connexions lay among those of them who accorded in doctrine with his own church. His rule of judgment, therefore, ought not to be considered as merely having respect to party; nor was it determined by a minute regard to his own sentiments in disputable points; but it was formed on the great outlines of doctrine and practice, which are evidently contained in the Scriptures.

4. Our attention should next be directed to the composed manner, in which this honoured and useful servant of God, looked forward to the approach of death. Though he was in general healthy and of a good constitution, yet for a long time before he died,

he was sensible that he grew old, and often spake of his nearness to the eternal world, with a serenity, that shewed these reflections to be familiar, and even satisfactory, to him: and when indeed it became evident that the solemn season was arrived, there was no occasion to conceal his real situation from him. He considered his sickness as a summons from his gracious Lord, and calmly prepared to comply with it: being surrounded by his children, and commending them and their's to the blessing of that God and Saviour, whom he had trusted, and with whom he had walked; recommending to them his service and salvation, and then calmly resigning his spirit into his gracious hands; he put many in remembrance of dying Jacob, blessing his twelve sons, and then yielding up the ghost:—and the impression made upon the minds of those who beheld the tender, instructive, solemn, and animating scene, will probably not soon be effaced. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the up-" right; for the end of that man is peace."

This is by no means intended, as a delineation of the *whole* character, which we are considering; but merely as an attempt to point out a few of its most distinguishing and undeniable features, and such as were most obvious to those who were the best acquainted with him; whether they might understand the principles from which they resulted, or not.—Were we to examine minutely, every part of his conduct, in domestick, relative, commercial, and private life, and to descant on it in the style of panegyrick, much more might be adduced worthy of commendation and imitation. If, on the other hand, every part

should be rigorously scrutinized, it is not denied, that blemishes might be descried; nay, that even faults might be found. Doubtless, some have been observed, and perhaps lamented, by those who were much conversant with him: but nothing inconsistent with strict probity, enlarged benevolence, genuine piety, and deep humility. The Evangelists have delineated a perfect character in the history of Christ; but no other can be found among the whole human race: however, were men in general, in their several stations, enabled to act in the manner that hath been described, how would the miseries of the world be prevented, removed, or mitigated! How harmless, peaceful, and useful would they be to each other, in their families, connexions, and in civil society! How happy would they be in themselves! And how happy would they render all around them! When this shall become the general character of mankind, (as it will, when they shall become true christians,) then wars will cease throughout all the earth, and men will only contend with each other, who shall most abound in love and good works.—We proceed therefore,

II. To consider some of the religious principles, which gave rise to these peculiarities of character and conduct.

We may conceive of these, as similar to the internal construction of a watch, from which, though unseen, arises its exact outward motion. The whole of what will be adduced on this head, is virtually comprised in the words of the text, of which, the love of Christ forms, as it were, the centre.—In the introduction, some observations have been made on St. Paul's

leading motives and consequent conduct: and it may here be added, that the same principles must form the main spring of holy activity in the heart of every real christian; and that a measure of the same constraining love of Christ was the real source of those distinguishing circumstances, in the character and conduct of our honoured friend, concerning which we have been discoursing.

It cannot be expected that a full delineation of christian principles can here be given. For this, the reader must be referred to the Scriptures, especially to the New Testament, to that book which this servant of God studied day by day thence imbibing those instructions which, by divine grace, formed that character for piety and beneficence, which hath been commended to the reader's consideration and imitation.—But it may be proper to point out some of those principles, evidently founded in Scripture, which he was known by his more intimate friends to hold; and which, centring in the love of Christ, seem to have been most influential on his practice.

If we consult the Bible, we find that man is there considered as standing related to God, his Creator, Governor, and Judge. From this relation arise duties and obligations, at once very strict and extensive, and very reasonable and necessary: and we need that redemption of the death of Christ, of which the apostle speaks, only in consequence of having acted inconsistently with those relations and obligations.—A rational, dependent, and accountable creature, that has received all his powers and possessions from God, and is here in a state of preparation and probation; whose soul is immortal, and whose body must shortly die and at length

rise again; who must appear before God in judgment, and be placed in a state of unchangeable and eternal happiness or misery, according to his conduct in this present world: I say, such a being must be allowed to stand in a very important situation; and he who considers this doctrine of his relation to God with hearty self-application, must consider himself his *servant* in all that he does, and his *steward* in all that he possesses; and he must regard it as his duty, interest, and wisdom, to use and do every thing with reference to the will, favour, and honour of his Sovereign Lord, his liberal Benefactor, his holy heart-searching Judge, and the righteous Arbiter of his eternal condition. But who is there that has fulfiled, or is disposed thus unreservedly and heartily to fulfil, these duties, in their large and spiritual extent? Hence therefore results a consciousness of guilt, and liableness to condemnation at the tribunal of God. This the apostle intimates, when he says, "then were all dead." While St. Paul "measured himself by other rules that the holy, spiritual, and perfect law of God, "He was alive *without* "*the law:* but when the commandment came, sin "revived, and he died." So long as men judge of their own conduct by the general maxims and customs of the world, and by the ordinary rules of judgment; they will not readily be induced to plead guilty before God. But "by the law is the knowledge of "sin" and he who understands the extent, spirituality, reasonableness, and excellency of the two great commandments, "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God, "with all thy heart;" and "Thou shalt love thy "neighbour as thyself:" he that judges all his former

" and present conduct; his thoughts, words, actions, tempers, motives, and affections, by this rule: he who sees this law perfectly reduced to practice, in the character of Christ, and daily compares his own with it; he, I say, will gradually form a more humble opinion of himself, and perceive, that " by the works of the law shall no flesh be " justified in the sight of God." This will lead him to discover sin in every part of his conduct; and shew him his continual need of mercy and forgiveness; and convince him that neither his person, nor his defective services, can in any other way find acceptance with a holy God. He will thus also discern, that his heart is incapable of so loving God and man, except it be renewed and rectified by the energy of divine grace. This humiliation, this broken and contrite heart, this poverty of spirit, forms the chief preparation for the due exercise of every christian grace, and the performance of every christian duty. It is essential in forming such a character as hath been delineated, both in those things, which the world commends, and those which it censures. This was certainly the judgment which our deceased friend had formed of himself: he was fully convinced of the sinfulness of his past life, however blameless in the sight of men: he was aware of the evil of his own heart, and of the manifold defects in every day's conduct; for he weighed the whole in the impartial balance of the sanctuary. These streams, he traced to their fountain, the corruption of the human heart; and he could not refuse to believe the testimony of Scripture, concerning the apostacy and fall of man in our first parents, a doctrine

very gloomy indeed when considered alone; but not so when viewed in its connexion with our redemption by Christ; and by which alone we can explain, and account for, the undeniable state of mankind in the present, and in every former, age of the world.—He was ready to subscribe to the declarations of Scripture on this subject, without any palliation, as applicable to himself, as well as others; and from the time, when his thoughts were first seriously and deeply employed about religion, to the moment, when he breathed his soul into the Redeemer's hands, he could adopt the Publican's prayer, and say, "God be merciful to me "a sinner."—And let any man carefully examine the language of the most eminent and approved characters, mentioned in Scripture, as well as the general tenour of that Sacred Volume; * and he will surely find, that this judgment and disposition are always represented as more characteristick of genuine piety, than any other whatever.

With this doctrine, of man's obligations to God, his demerit through the breach of them, and his consequent need of mercy, those which relate to the real divinity of the Person, and the atonement of the death, of Christ, are inseparably connected. The Scriptures speak of the Saviour as "God manifested in the "flesh," and "as bearing our sins in his own body "on the tree, suffering *for sins*, the just for the un-"just, that he might bring us to God." These great and important truths, and that incomprehensible mys-

* Job xlii. 5, 6. Isaiah vi. 1—8. Matt. iii. 11—14. vii. 8. Ephes. iii. 8. 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.

tery of a Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead, our friend, of whom we speak, did not hesitate to receive in humble adoring faith. He believed, that the obedience unto death of Emmanuel, the incarnate Son of God, with all his concurrent debasement and agonies, was intended as an exhibition of the justice and holiness of our Supreme Governor and Judge; as a display of his hatred of sin, and regard to the honour of his law; and as a declaration of man's guilt and righteous condemnation, and of his utter inability to ransom, or save his own soul: and that this was intended to make way for the honourable exercise of mercy to sinners, and for the harmony of the divine attributes, in the work of man's salvation.—He was satisfied, that it was right and reasonable for our offended Creator, to appoint the way in which he would deign to be reconciled to us; that his infinite wisdom had devised, his love provided, and his truth revealed this method of our salvation; and that it was worthy of God, and suited the case and wants of sinful men. He therefore concluded, that we can be justified only through faith in Christ, and an interest in his merits and atonement; and that by him alone, as our risen and ascended High Priest and Intercessor, we guilty creatures can have access to the Father upon a throne of grace, and at length find admission into heaven itself.

In a steady belief and profession of these doctrines, and in an avowed reliance on the righteousness, atonement, and intercession of the divine Redeemer, he lived, and died: and, believing that there was no salvation in any other, he laboured to spread the know-

ledge of these truths among men, and to recommend them to their attention by every means in his power.

An apprehension of the dignity and glory of the Redeemer's person, and of the consummate excellency of his character, united with a scriptural view of the suitableness and preciousness of his salvation, and of his infinite condescension, and compassion for perishing sinners, cannot fail to excite an admiring love of him, and an ardent desire after an interest in his favour and salvation. And when any person, who hath been deeply humbled before God, under a consciousness of guilt, and hath greatly feared his indignation, finds himself freed from distressing apprehensions, obtains peace of conscience, and enjoys a lively hope of heaven, by faith in a crucified Saviour; the greatness of his deliverance and consolations, the glorious prospects which open to his view, the price that Christ paid for these blessings, and the freeness with which he confers them, when deeply meditated on, must form the mind to gratitude for obligations of immense and inconceivable value; and this gratitude must shew itself in obedience to the commands, and zeal for the glory, of him, who in this and all other respects, is so worthy of our highest love and most devoted services.

It may also be observed, that the cross of Christ, in this view of it, is the grand display of the worth of immortal souls, and of the importance of eternal things. When we view by realizing faith this astonishing object, we are struck with the vanity of all earthly pursuits, possessions, enjoyments, and distinctions: it demonstrates the miserable and ruined condition of the whole human race, in themselves; and

gives the most affecting discoveries of the love and mercy of God to sinners, connected with the glory of his justice and holiness: it points out the real nature of true excellence, and of man's happiness, and his proper employment in this life; and it tends to form the believer's mind to a new judgment of almost every object which he beholds, and of every subject which he considers. This leads him to propose to himself new ends in whatever he does, and to feel new motives to activity; to copy other examples, and to conduct himself by other maxims, than he formerly did. In short, he is "in Christ Jesus a new crea-"ture, old things are passed away, behold all things "are become new." He now desires to concur, as a humble instrument in the hand of his Lord, in promoting that design of glorifying him, and doing good to men, for which the Redeemer became incarnate, and shed his precious blood. Our deceased friend thus "knew the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that "though he were rich, yet for our sakes he became "poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich:" and this influenced him in the use of that affluence, and in the improvement of those talents, which were committed to his stewardship.

Hence also arises the habitual recollection, that we are the servants of Jesus Christ, being now under additional obligations, in every thing to do his will. For, as our Redeemer, he is become our Lord and Master by many new and endearing ties. He hath many servants on earth, and hath allotted to every man his work: and he will shortly return to take an ac-

count of them.* Whoever firmly believes this, and duly estimates his obligations, will consider his time, health, abilities, wealth, influence, authority, as no longer his own, to be disposed of according to his natural inclinations, or for his own reputation; but as Christ's, to be made use of, according to his commands, and for his glory: thus he is distinguished from those who "will not have Christ to reign over "them;" and from those who call him Lord, but will not obey him: and his faith appears to work by love of Christ, of christians, and of all men. Yet, considering his obligations and his prospect of a glorious recompence, he will count all his services little, and will be ready for any expensive or self-denying obedience, to which he may be called. But while he obeys his Master in those liberal actions, which the world approves; he must also do his will in many things that disgust multitudes; as they tend to criminate their conduct, and as they run counter to all their maxims and fashions. For, the servant of Christ must please his Master, and cannot often please men also; nor must he call good evil, or evil good, out of complaisance to the sentiments of his neighbours.

The judgment which the believer has formed of the end, for which he is continued in this present world, has also much influence upon his conduct. After he has obtained a comfortable persuasion of his acceptance with God, he is generally left to spend some years in this world of sin and sorrow; but he is a stranger on earth, and is travelling forward to his

* Mark xiii. 34—37.

home in heaven. He does not, therefore, consider the acquisition of wealth, the enjoyment of ease and earthly pleasure, or the attainment of honour or authority, as the end for which his life is continued: his ambition is fixed upon nobler objects. Here he is called upon to glorify God, and to do what good he can to mankind; and all other concerns appear in his view mean and inconsiderable, if they do not, in some measure, subserve these great designs. At the same time his life is rendered comfortable by peace of conscience, and communion with God; by the pleasure of doing his will, and being useful; and by the hope and earnest of heavenly felicity: and he only counts life a blessing, because introductory to a happier state: he desires to consider death, (though terrible to nature,) as the termination of all his conflicts and troubles, and to do every thing with reference to his latter end.—These were principles, which abode in the mind of that person, whose character is here proposed as an example, to those especially of his own line and rank in life.

Another doctrine of the Scriptures, which we must not omit to mention, as firmly believed by our late friend, and as essential in forming that character, which hath been described; is that of our entire dependence on the influences of the Holy Spirit, in every thing that relates to the knowledge and practice of true and spiritual religion.—It cannot be expected, that within the compass of one discourse, any regular defence can be made of all the great doctrines of christianity; much less that all the profane objections often made to them can be answered: but it would be

an inexcusable omission, if something were not spoken very explicitly upon this most important subject; which is so far removed from the contemplation of men in general, and does such violence to the worldliness of all their ideas, that it is no wonder they should count the very mention of it enthusiastick; however insisted on in the Bible, and in the excellent liturgy of our church; and however consistent it is proved to be with true and enlightened reason.

Let any one reflect on that part of the character we have delineated, which relates to his devotional duties; and if this be admitted as a real and essential part of religion, the reasonableness, and even the necessity, of believing this doctrine must be undeniably evinced. For why should a man employ himself so earnestly in the exercises of devotion, or indeed why should he pray at all for any of those things, which relate to the improvement of his heart, if he denies that such influences of the Spirit of God are to be expected, and supposes, he can do all that is requisite by his own unassisted power and resolution?

The prayers which we offer to the Lord, "to cre-"ate in us a clean heart, and to renew a right spirit "within us," are, next to our praises and thanksgivings, by far the most spiritual part of our religious worship, and accord most to the patterns of devotion contained in the scriptures; and if these were expunged, we should have scarcely any thing to ask, which could decidedly distinguish the spiritual prayers of a true christian from the carnal and selfish desires of an ungodly man. The sincerity and reality of our devotions, (if indeed we ask for spiritual blessings,) must

therefore entirely depend on our conviction, that we need the assistance which we crave, and that we may expect it upon the warrant of God's word: and the coldness and inattention, which so many feel when they affect to pray, necessarily arises from, and must always accompany, their unbelief in respect of this doctrine. For how can they ask any thing of God in good earnest, who consider it as no part of christianity to believe, that he will bestow it upon them? Unless men will therefore condemn all prayer for spiritual blessings as irrational; they cannot consistently blame the belief in the Holy Spirit of God, as the Author of all true wisdom and holiness in real christians. On the contrary, it is necessary, to give any meaning to our prayers, that we should be firmly established in this faith and expectation.

Indeed we do not want the assistance of the Holy Spirit for many outward performances, that are counted good and honourable in the false estimation of mankind; but that spiritual knowledge of religious truth, and that holiness of heart, which are essential to, and inseparably connected with, salvation, entirely proceed from his sacred influences, as the Scripture abundantly testifies.—Except a man be born of water, and " of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of " God."—" If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, " he is none of his: and as many as are led by the Spi- " rit of God, they are the sons, (or children,) of God." " That " without holiness no man shall see the Lord," is one plain testimony of Scripture; and that the Holy Spirit of God is the Author of all true holiness in any of our fallen race, is a doctrine equally laid down

there. Holiness consists in conformity to the image and law of God, to the perfect example of Christ, to the dispositions of angels, and to the employments and pleasures of heaven. He who deeply meditates on these subjects, will evidently perceive, that he is not in himself holy, and that he cannot make himself so. Yet is this state of the heart as necessary to happiness, as the forgiveness of our sins, and our reconciliation unto God. The recovery of fallen man to holiness, or to a spiritual and heavenly state of the understanding, judgment, will, affections, imagination, memory, and conscience, is the work of the Holy Spirit. The good dispositions and actions, which spring from thence, are called "the fruits of the Spirit;" and the Holy Spirit is promised to be given, for these purposes, to them that ask for this blessing in the name of our heavenly Advocate. But till a man be convinced of this, and apply for them in earnest prayer, he cannot so much as seek holiness, in the way prescribed by the word of God.

Again, he who knows how dependent he is on that sacred Influence, will be afraid of grieving, or quenching, the Spirit by evil tempers, by selfishness, or sinful indulgences; and will be excited to a watchfulness and circumspection in his words and works, which is little conceived of by those, who deny or neglect this doctrine: he will become more careful to cherish, and comply with, all holy emotions and affections, more diligent in attending on the means of grace, and more cautious in shunning all places and companies, which counteract the influences of this sacred Comforter. And doubtless this persuasion and dependence tended

greatly to regulate the conduct, and to form the character, of him who is the subject of this Discourse.

It must, however, be allowed, that there is such a thing as enthusiasm, and that it is often productive of fatal delusions, and other serious evils to mankind: and he who expects to discover truth, or the state of his soul, or his duty, by immediate revelations, or suggestions of the Spirit to his mind, without a proper attention to the written word of God, as the standard and rule of doctrine, practice, and experience, is verging to that perilous extreme. But, to depend on the influences of the Holy Spirit, to guide us into the knowledge of those truths, which are revealed in the Scripture; or to form our minds to those holy affections, to enable us to those duties, and to put us in possession of that hope, peace, and consolation, to which the Bible calls us; cannot be chargeable with enthusiasm by those who believe that blessed book.

Lastly: The view, which the christian hath attained of the final account and retribution, has great influence upon him. He believes indeed that a sinner can only be justified before God by faith in Christ; yet he also believes, that every justified person will be *graciously* rewarded, probably both in the measure of his present consolations, and certainly, in the degree of his future glory and felicity, according to his present diligence, zeal, and faithfulness: and that the good works of true christians will be produced before the assembled world, as the evidences of their faith and love of Christ; even as the wickedness and negligence of nominal christians will be produced as proofs of their hypocrisy, impenitence, and unbelief. In hope, therefore, of being short-

ly welcomed by his condescending and gracious Lord and Saviour, saying to him, "Well done, good and "faithful servant; thou hast been faithful in a few "things, I will make thee ruler over many things, "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," this exemplary disciple of Christ, continued to improve his talents to the end of his life; and no doubt he is won entered into his blessed "rest, and his works fol- "low him," and his Lord doth honour him; according as he hath said, "Them that honour me, I will "honour, but they that despise me shall be lightly "esteemed."

These were some of the principles, which combined their influence, to form the character before us; and if their tendency be properly estimated, they will be found fully adequate to the effects, which have been ascribed to them: nay, they would produce far greater, and more excellent effects upon the conduct of mankind, than we ever witnessed or heard of, if they were complete in their subsistence and operation; and if they were not counteracted by a variety of internal, and external impediments, in this world of imperfection, encumbrance, and temptation. Let us then proceed,

III. To shew that these same principles, wherever they exist, must of course produce the same effects; allowing indeed for difference of situation, natural temper, and other circumstances.

An habitual apprehension of our relation to God and the eternal world, and of those obligations which thence arise; the custom of judging every one of our thoughts, words, and actions, according to the holy

and spiritual law of God; that humiliation of heart, which is the never failing effect of this severe and exact self-examination; that firm belief of the doctrines of salvation for sinners, through the merits and sufferings of the incarnate Son of God, and by faith in his name; that peace and hope, which spring from reliance on the mercy of God in him; that love and gratitude, which the rejoicing believer feels towards his adorable Redeemer and Friend; that view of every object in its relation to the cross of Christ; that willing subjection to him, as our beloved Lord and Master; that knowledge of the true value and comfort of life, and that daily preparation for death; that sincere prayer to God for, and constant dependence on, the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit; and that prospect of the day of judgment and the glorious recompence then to be awarded to us by our reconciled God, which have been spoken of, need only to be clearly stated, in order to shew that they cannot fail to have a most powerful effect, when with combined energy they operate from year to year, in regulating our hearts, pursuits, and actions. They will assuredly give a peculiar direction to the exercise of a man's abilities, and the use of his influence, time, and possessions; they will continue to insinuate themselves into every operation of his mind, and every undertaking of his life; they will gradually turn all his purposes and pursuits into one channel, and thus lead him to contract habits, in many respects opposite to those persons, who are uninfluenced by them. Nor should we have cause to wonder at any degree of exertion, self-denial, or liberality, to which a man thus

impelled should at length attain; when the will of his Lord, the honour of his cause, the relief, comfort, and benefit of those, whom he deigns to acknowledge as his brethren and friends, or the salvation of immortal souls, demand them of him. And we might reasonably expect, that he would be ready to abridge himself of every needless pleasure; to renounce opportunities of accumulating wealth, or acquiring distinction; nay, to venture, and even to lay down, his life, to subserve those great ends, for which the Lord of Glory shed his precious blood.

No application of mind, no contrivance to render other employments subservient to those important objects, could in such a case appear wonderful. The precepts and example of Christ; love to him and his people; compassion to perishing sinners; a sense of duty; a wise regard to present comfort, and to that of a dying hour, and to the interests of eternity, must concur in urging the believer to devote his all to the service of his God and Saviour. The utmost that he can do must appear little, when compared with his infinite obligations, and the perfection of his rule. He must still find much to be ashamed of, and be left to the last, entirely dependent on the mercy of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ. And indeed, the only thing to be wondered at, is, that we are so feebly influenced by so many and powerful principles, and that we are so often induced to forget them, and act contrary to them.

The same principles cannot fail to lead the christian to judge of other men by the same rules: and while his heart melts with compassion towards them, and his

hand is stretched out to relieve the miseries of his bitterest enemies, and the vilest of the human species; he cannot but judge, that the most of them are thronging the broad road to destruction; nor can he be induced to flatter those with the hope of heaven, who continue strangers and enemies to this great salvation; or to amuse them with encomiums on their dignity, and on the merit of their supposed virtues, of which the highest object is self-exaltation. This habitual reverence for the example, precepts, authority, and honour of Christ, must prevent him from conforming to the fashions, or courting the friendship, of a world which is in rebellion against him: and the same principles that constrain him to the most enlarged beneficence, induce him also decidedly to refuse compliances which are contrary to his conscience, and with a holy singularity to shun all places and avocations, that interfere with his "walking in all the ordinances "and commandments of the Lord blameless." They evidently tend to produce at once, abstraction from worldly pleasures, and a serenity and cheerfulness of mind without them: they teach at the same time frugality in personal expence, and an enlarged scale of charity; and they render that course of life delightful, which appears wearisome for its sameness, and melancholy through its seriousness, to those who have not experienced, and are as yet incapable of relishing, its exalted and refined satisfactions. And finally, whilst so many tremble at, or run away from, the thought of death, through apprehensions of meeting something far worse than the most distressing evils of life; these principles must conduce to a composure of

mind in looking forward to the concluding scene, and in the expectation of being then admitted into a far happier state. A right understanding of the outlines of evangelical doctrine will discover the christian to be consistent with himself, even in those parts of his conduct that appear most discordant with each other; and only inconsistent, in coming so short of perfection.

These principles operating upon the mind of an apostle, whose endowments were proportioned to his mission and authority, and whose opportunities were almost as extensive as his zeal and philanthropy, formed the character of St. Paul. All his self-denying, persevering, and almost incredible labours; his patient sufferings; his exemplary holiness; his extensive usefulness; and whatever distinguished him from other men; arose from these and similar principles, through the operation of the Holy Spirit. They glowed with such ardour, and wrought with such energy, in his heart, that "he counted not his life dear "unto himself, so that he might finish his course "with joy, and the ministry, that he had received of "the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of "God."

They have also combined their influence in forming the characters, and directing the conduct, of that glorious army of martyrs, who, in different ages and places, have chosen to suffer the extremity of torture, and to expire on the rack, or in the flames, rather than deny the truth, dishonour the name, or violate the commands, of their beloved Saviour.

When such principles abound in the heart of a pa-

rish minister, or an ordinary pastor of moderate talents, they produce plain, faithful, affectionate preaching; holy exemplary living; benevolence to the bodies, as well as love to the souls, of his people; a constant attention to the various parts of his important work, as the pleasure and business of his life; a disposition to watch for opportunities of doing good; perseverance, with meekness and patience under discouragements, and amidst reproaches, contempt, and ingratitude; and a mind contented with a very moderate subsistence, and evidently superior to the love of filthy lucre.—When superior talents, or extraordinary circumstances, concur with them, they form the missionary and Evangelist; who must expect to struggle with difficulties, endure hardships, and encounter scorn and opposition, proportioned to the importance and usefulness of his peculiar station and service.

When they animate the breast of a king, they form a David, a Hezekiah, a Josiah, who employ their authority and influence, with unwearied attention, to promote the cause of God, the interests of piety, the peace of kingdoms, and the welfare of mankind, by all means consistent with the rights of conscience, and the precepts of God's word. They will influence the statesman and senator to devise, arrange, and execute with fortitude and perseverance, all such plans, as he deems conducive to the same great ends. The man of affluence, or of large commercial dealings, will emulate the example before us; and every one, down to the lowest mechanick, or menial servant, if led by these principles, will fill up his circle and employ his ability to the glory of God, the ornament of the gos-

pel, and the good of mankind, by a conscientious obedience to the precepts of Christ, in the various relations and occupations of life. Nor will this, in any instance, be wholly without success; though in the higher orders of society, the light of such examples will be more conspicuous, and their beneficial effects more extensive.

It now only remains for us to conclude the subject, by drawing a few important practical inferences.

1. Instead of looking upon the character before us, as a sort of prodigy, to be gazed at with unmeaning admiration; we should remember, that every man is equally bound, both to receive these principles by a lively faith, to act from them in this manner, according to his station in life, his abilities, and opportunities: nay, if we speak strictly on the subject, that even this is far less, than is every man's bounden duty. The perfection of Christ's obedience unto death was no more, than the holy law of God required of him as Man and Mediator, in *his peculiar* circumstances; and what followed of course from his loving the Lord with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself. After his example, as St. John testifies, that "we ought "to lay down our lives for the brethren," this perfect law, is the rule and standard of duty to every man; and all that comes short of it, is sin, and needs forgiveness. And hence arises that humiliating, yet animating doctrine, that we are "justified freely by "the grace of God, through the redemption, that is "in Christ Jesus." Though no man therefore perfectly obeys the whole law, in any part of his life, and no true christian expects to be justified on the ground

of his own good works: yet these principles form every one who receives them, to an obedience of the heart, springing out of love to God in Christ, and causing him habitually to yield up himself to his service. If all men were influenced by them, they would be habitually upright, benevolent, pious, temperate, and useful, according to their abilities and opportunities: and did true Christianity abound, such characters would be common in the court, senate, city, country, and among all ranks and professions in the community.

2. I observe, how effectual the principles of the gospel are, in promoting moral goodness; and how they animate men of like passions and nature with the most sinful of the human race, to such a pitch of exertion, in the service of God and of their fellow-creatures, as no human system ever pretended to effect; and such as many, who know little of religion, seem hardly to have an idea of.

In support of this inference, we appeal to their genuine tendency, and we appeal to facts and characters. Nor need we go back to St. Paul, or the primitive christians, or to ancient reformers and martyrs. Even our degenerate times may boast of a Howard and a Thornton, who, in different ways, have caused astonished multitudes to applaud their disinterested and generous philanthropy; yet most of their admirers have not understood that the love of Christ constrained them thus to act, and never considered themselves required to imitate their examples. Indeed every town, village, and street, where these doctrines are taught, received, and understood, produce characters not so much inferior in intrinsick excellence, as in opportunities of ex-

hibiting it upon a more conspicuous theatre; as those, who are conversant with them, can testify. It is indeed allowed, that there are also vain talkers and deceivers, who profess some of the same truths, and distort them by extravagant representations, or disgrace them by gross immoralities. But this fulfils the Scriptures, wherein it is foretold, that men of this description would arise; and that when the good seed of the word was sown, an enemy would come and sow tares in the same field. Let then such persons as would know the truth, endeavour to divest themselves of prejudices; and after careful examination let them decide, whether the greatest number of evidently good and useful men, of every rank and profession in the community, be not found among those, who are zealous for the principles of the gospel, as they have here been proposed to the reader's consideration.

3. Let it be seriously enquired, who are the best friends of mankind: they who neglect these principles of the gospel, or perhaps even zealously oppose them, that they may establish certain reveries and conjectures, which they dignify with the names of philosophy, or rational religion; or they who call sinners to repentance, and faith in the Son of God; to the love of Him who died for us, and rose again; to the love of their neighbours after his example and in obedience to his precepts: and while they humbly rely only on his meritorious obedience, and propitiatory sufferings, exhort men to prove themselves indeed his disciples, by being zealous of good works?

Lastly: Can Christianity, even as here feebly and imperfectly delineated, and as illustrated by an exam-

ple, in which it was in some good measure reduced to practice, be denied to be beautiful, excellent, and beneficial to mankind? What then is wanting, but that those who believe and love these truths, should aim to be such living sermons, as may convince all around them of the superior excellence and efficacy of their principles: and to shew that "the grace of God, which "bringeth salvation, doth indeed teach men to deny un- "godliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righ- "teously, and godly in this present world?"

Let us then call upon ourselves and each other, to "let our light shine before men, that they may see "our good works, and glorify our Father who is in "Heaven:" and let us continually beg of him to communicate to us more abundantly his sanctifying Spirit, that we may "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." To Him therefore in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all glory, honour, adoration, and thanksgiving, now and for evermore. Amen.

A

SERMON,

ON OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF THE

REV. JEREMIAH NEWELL,

VICAR OF GREAT MISSENDEN, AND PERPETUAL CURATE OF LEE,

IN THE COUNTY OF BUCKS:

Preached

AT MISSENDEN,

JUNE 19, 1803.

TO WHICH IS ADDED, A MEMOIR OF THE DECEASED.

SERMON III.

PHILIPPIANS i. 21.

To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

VARIOUS have been the efforts of man's ingenuity to acquire wealth and splendour; but the unwearied attempts, which for a long course of years were made by numbers, to find a way of converting the baser metals into gold, was perhaps the most extraordinary of them all. Yet could it have succeeded to the utmost wishes formed by its deluded votaries, what material advantages to individuals, or to the community, would have been derived from it?

But he who has learned to convert death itself into gain, has indeed made a discovery of infinite importance to the dying race of men. This, the apostles and prophets learned by divine revelation; this, they communicate to us in their writings; this, all faithful ministers are employed to teach mankind: yet, alas!

how little attention is excited to the important subject! how few are disposed to profit by their instructions!

St. Paul wrote the epistle, from which our text is taken, when a prisoner at Rome for preaching the gospel: for in both ancient and modern times, and in almost every place, men are allowed, without disturbance, to corrupt the principles and morals of numbers; but he, who zealously lays himself out to make known "the word of the truth of the gospel," and to "call sinners to repentance, and works meet "for repentance," must expect opposition and persecution: so, that, even in this favoured land of liberty, and under our good laws and mild governors, reproach and contempt never fail to be the reward of such diligent labourers, however spotless their character, and unexceptionable their measures. What a striking proof and illustration of the scriptural doctrine, that Satan is the god and prince of this world!

But the apostle, besides his imprisonment, had other trials to support; and among the rest, there arose some teachers, who "preached the gospel from "envy and strife, supposing to add affliction to his "bonds."

Yet even this could not disconcert him; nay, he rejoiced that in every way Christ was preached. We must suppose that on the whole their doctrine was sound, though their motives were corrupt and their conduct base: and, provided Christ were honoured and sinners converted, the apostle was ready to submit to any personal degradation; nay, he knew, that even the misconduct of these teachers would turn to his salvation, through the prayers of his people, "and

" the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." Thus far he was satisfied that all was gain to him. He then breaks forth in these remarkable words: " According " to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing " I shall be ashamed; but that with all boldness, as " always so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my " body, whether it be by life or death; *for to me to* " *live is Christ, and to die is gain.*" As if he had said, ' Whether I be gradually worn out by incessant ' labours, hardships, and sufferings, or at once cut ' down by a violent death: provided this poor body ' may be an instrument of honouring my beloved ' Saviour, I am fully satisfied. This is all I desire to ' live for; and as to death, I know that, that too will ' be my gain, my greatest gain!' " For if I live in the " flesh, this is the fruit of my labour," (or this is worth my while) " yet what I shall choose I wot not: " for I have a desire," (an ardent longing) " to de- " part and to be with Christ, which is far better: ne- " vertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for " you." You observe, that the apostle expected to be with Christ, as soon as he ceased to abide in the flesh; and that he longed especially to be *with* Christ, as the source of his felicity.

A criminal justly condemned to an ignominious death, but pardoned and restored to full favour by the singular grace of his offended sovereign, longs for liberty, pure air, and all the comforts which he is warranted to expect on his release: yet, if his continuance in the prison, and enduring all its inconveniences, may conduce to the honour of his benefactor and the substantial good of his fellow prisoners; he is

willing to forego his own gratification, from pure motives of grateful zeal and compassionate love. This seems an apt illustration of the apostle's excellent frame of mind, when he wrote the words under our consideration. This attention to the context will, I trust, make way for our entering more readily and fully into the meaning of the words, which I first read to you: "To me to live is Christ, and to die is "gain." And in further discoursing on them I shall consider distinctly the two clauses of the sentence.

I. Then, To me to live is Christ.

The concise and energetick way, in which the sacred writers express themselves on subjects which are remote from the apprehension of men in general, frequently causes them to appear obscure; and their language in some instances is of that nature, which, had it been *first* used by some modern teacher, would have been by many considered as *words without ideas*. For instance, were not this declaration, "To me to "live is Christ," sheltered under the venerable name of the apostle Paul, who is generally spoken of with respect even by those who oppose his doctrines, it would doubtless have excited exclamations concerning 'the mystical language of enthusiasts.' Yet the declaration, when soberly explained, by comparison with other parts of scripture, and of the apostle's writings in particular, contains the most important meaning, and conveys in a very emphatical manner the most valuable instruction. "But the natural man "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for "they are foolishness to him; neither can he know "them, because they are spiritually discerned."

A passage, in many respects like this part of our text, may open the way to our subject: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but "Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in "the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who "loved me and gave himself for me."* This remarkable verse contains two particulars, which are implied in the clause "To me to live is Christ." Conscious of having forfeited the favour and incurred the wrath of God, by violating the divine law in his past life, and also, that his present obedience was very far from perfect: the apostle declares that he expected eternal life and all things pertaining to it, entirely by faith in the Son of God, by a firm belief of the record which God had given of his Son, and by an habitual reliance on him for all the blessings of salvation: so that while in the flesh, and exposed to temptation through its weakness, he relied on Christ, and came to him for pardon, acceptance, and grace, as to that Saviour who "loved him and gave himself for him." Thus he was enabled to maintain a joyful hope of heavenly felicity, and to persevere in his christian course, which in no other way could he ever have done.

In this sense, "To me to live is Christ," implies, that the righteousness, atonement, and intercession of Christ, embraced and habitually relied on, was the only foundation on which he rested his hope of finding mercy, escaping deserved wrath, and obtaining eternal life. "This is the record, that God hath

* Gal. ii. 20.

" given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; He " that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the " Son of God hath not life." " The wages of sin is " death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through " Jesus Christ our Lord."—" God so loved the world " that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever " believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal " life."

The former part of the same verse contains an idea, which he expresses with some variation in another place. " If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those " things which are above:—for ye are dead, and your " life is hid with Christ in God.—When Christ, who " is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear " with him in glory."*

Christ was the Source of spiritual life to the apostle. " I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." By the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and by the instructions and encouragements of the gospel, he was risen to a new and divine life. His former principles of activity and sources of enjoyment were crucified, in conformity to the crucifixion of his Saviour. He was no longer actuated by ambition or covetousness, or by malignant or sensual passions; all these he hated, opposed, and mortified, " Nevertheless he " lived:" he was extremely active, and full of hope and joy: " Yet not I," says he, " but Christ liveth " in me." " The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" had enlightened his mind, subdued his will, and purified his affections, that Christ lived in him, as the Owner and Director of all his powers and faculties,

* Col. iii. 1—4.

and as employing them all in his service and to his glory. Zeal and love now filled and animated his heart; "The love of Christ constrained him," and, combining with compassion for lost sinners and love to his fellow christians, formed a new and most powerful spring of exertion: so that the crucifixion of selfish and worldly principles, which had before prompted him to action, did not at all lead him to inactivity; but the humble, disinterested, and self-denying apostle was more earnest and unwearied in his labours, and more bold and enterprizing amidst dangers and sufferings, than the ambitious and unrelenting persecutor Saul had been. Nay, his intrepidity and perseverance, in the most arduous attempts for the honour of his Saviour and the salvation of souls, were perhaps as great as ever were manifested by the ambitious warrior, in the full career of successful pursuit of glory and dominion. Thus he acted even as if Christ had lived in him, and dictated all his words, and directed every part of his conduct. And well might he, who was conscious that this was his habitual object and course of life, say, with unhesitating appropriation, "Christ loved me, and gave himself "for me:"—"To me to live is Christ, and to die is "gain!"

But these leading ideas are rather implied, than directly intended, in the words of my text.

Let us, therefore, my brethren, consider in what sense the word CHRIST is used by the apostle in this place. A few similar instances will greatly assist our enquiry. "Ye have not so learned Christ." He is here spoken of as the Instruction, as well as the

Teacher, and the single word Christ is put for the whole of Christianity. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus "Christ;" that is, be holy as he is holy; let your spirit and conduct be such, as those of Christ himself, placed in your circumstances would have been. "We preach Christ crucified." "They preached Christ unto them," as the central and grand subject of their instructions, yet not to the exclusion of other subjects, as connected with it. In these and other passages, a single word, familiar and dear to believers, is put for a variety of ideas respecting the life of faith and holiness, and must be explained according to the context.

In the clause before us, Christ may be considered not only in his person, and in the character of our Prophet, High Priest, and King; but also in respect of his church, his cause in the world, the honour of his name, and the credit and prosperity of his gospel. In this enlarged view of the subject, we may consider the clause as relating to the *business or employment* of the apostle's life. There was but one thing which he had to do on earth, or for which he desired to live, and that was to honour his Saviour, and promote his cause among men. "None of us liveth to himself."— I "live no longer to myself, but to him who died for "me and rose again." Having obtained an interest in his salvation, and experienced a new creation unto holiness, and being appointed to the apostleship; his sole business was, as animated by admiring love, and gratitude, and zeal, to feed Christ's lambs and sheep; to gather the lost into his fold; to promote, by every means in his power, the purity, peace, and enlargement of his church, and the stability, fruitfulness, and

comfort of his people; and to make known his salvation, as far as possible, to all mankind. 'This,' says 'he, 'is all I have here to do; and, as I greatly "de-"sire to depart hence and be with Christ," when this 'is done, I shall long to change this evil world for 'heavenly felicity. In doing this work, the love of 'Christ is my motive, his glory and the glory of God 'in him my object; his gracious acceptance my re-'ward: his commandments my rule; and his example, 'my pattern. "To me to live is Christ."

But you may perhaps say, 'this might be very proper for an apostle, or for any minister of the gospel; and the description brings to my recollection the manner in which our deceased pastor laboured among us: but we have farms or shops to mind, or trades to follow; we are labourers, or servants, and cannot be expected to adopt such language, or copy such an example.' I would, however, my brethren, wish you to remember, that "The Son of Man is as a man taking "a far journey, who left his house, and gave authori-"ty to his servants, and to every man his work, and "commanded the porter to watch.*" Christ has many servants, and every servant has his proper work. In large families all are not stewards, or porters, or butlers; but some are employed in one business, and some in another: and the good order of the family requires, that every one keep to his own work, and do not neglect it to mind another servant's business. And if the servant who performs the lowest offices be diligent, faithful, and obliging, he will be valued by

* Mark xiii. 34.

all reasonable masters far more, than an unfaithful or slothful steward. In like manner Christ has "stewards of the mysteries of God," and stewards entrusted with worldly riches, and servants of various orders: and if you are in the places assigned you by our common Lord, behaving in them according to his will, and giving up worldly advantages, or enduring hard usage, rather than disobey him; though your situation be low, he will more favour and honour you, than either the faithless steward of his mysteries, or the faithless steward of the unrighteous mammon; and while you are making it your one great business to honour and obey your gracious Saviour, each of you may with propriety say, "To me to live is Christ." But should you, without the most solid and sufficient reasons, quit your present post, to become a preacher of the gospel, instead of a reward, it is probable, you would meet with a rebuke; as a servant would do, who neglected his own work, to intrude, contrary to his master's will, into the proper business of the steward.—Nay, the servant of the minister, who performs his common household work, if *she* be faithful and conscientious on evangelical principles, and *he* preaches himself and not Christ the Lord, may properly say "what her master cannot, To me to live is Christ," 'I live to serve him and to do his will.'

2. But again, the *pleasure* of life is generally considered as distinct from its business; and many speak, as if living in pleasure were exclusively worthy the name of *life*, though the apostle declares, that "she who liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.' But speaking of superior pleasures, he says in another place,

" Now we *live* if ye stand fast in the Lord;" that is, life is pleasant and joyful to us.

In this sense likewise, the apostle doubtless meant the words under consideration, ' That which renders ' life sweet unto me, is " communion with the Fa- " ther and with his Son Jesus Christ," and the de- ' light which I take in his pleasant ways. " It is my " meat to do his will and finish his work." I hun- ' ger after this as my food, I relish it, I am refreshed ' by it. His love is better than life. I have lost my ' relish for sensual dissipated pleasures, and even for ' intellectual pleasures which have no connexion with ' Christ. Compared with rejoicing in Christ Jesus, I ' count them as nothing. Christ is my Joy, his ser- ' vice is my liberty, his smile my highest satisfaction; ' while the display of his glory, the prosperity of his ' people, the peace and purity of his church, and the ' conversion of sinners to him, cause me even on earth, ' in good measure, to participate the felicity, which ' angels more completely enjoy in heaven.'

3. But the reputation of a man's life may be distinguished from both the business and the pleasure of it: and accordingly numbers desperately risk their lives and souls, or even rush madly into eternity, rather than survive what they call their honour. Thus, in the superior circles, the word *life* means high life with its pomps and distinction, or in scriptural language, " the pride of life." For these honours and distinctions, the apostle seems once to have been a candidate: and though probably not of high birth, yet his superior abilities and education, his vigour of mind, his enterprizing spirit and indefatigable activi-

ty, and his zeal against christianity, bringing him into favour with the chief men of his nation, gave him the prospect of enviable success. But in this respect also he could say, "For Christ Jesus my Lord I have "suffered the loss of all things, and do count them "but dung that I may win Christ:" "God forbid "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord "Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to "me, and I to the world." Instead of seeking the honour that cometh from men, he willingly embraced scorn and ignominy. He gloried and rejoiced in being counted worthy to suffer shame for the sake of Christ. The sole honour after which he aspired, consisted in belonging to Christ; obeying him; enduring hatred, contempt, and persecution in his service; bearing his image, promoting his cause, turning many unto righteousness; and being welcomed at length by his Saviour, with "Well done, good and faithful ser-"vant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" and "shining with Christ for ever, like the sun in the "kingdom of his Father."

We might branch out our subject still more.—The apostle had no interest on earth, distinct from that of Christ and his cause. As this prospered, he counted himself to prosper; and Christ was his Portion in another world.

Lay these things together. Christ in his person and mediation was the only hope of eternal life to his venerable apostle, who derived his spiritual life, and every increase of it, from the Spirit of Christ. He only valued life, that he might do the work of Christ. This was his sole pleasure, honour, and interest. The

smiles and frowns of the world in vain assailed him; bonds and imprisonment could not move him; neither "Counted he his life dear to himself, so that he might "finish his course with joy, and the ministry which "he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the "gospel of the grace of God."

Was he not then a perfect character? Hear his own words in this epistle: "Not as though I had already "attained, either were already perfect. But this one "thing I do; forgetting the things that are behind, "and reaching forth to the things that are before, I "press forward to the mark."

He knew himself to be far from perfect, according to the demands of the divine law, the holiness of angels, or the perfection of the man Christ Jesus. He exceedingly hated sin, and longed after perfect holiness; but not being able to reach what he longed after, he cried out amidst all his attainments, "Oh "wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from "the body of this death?" Amazing! Surely, say some, St. Paul does not speak of himself, but of some other man! My brethren, had we as much spiritual knowledge, as holy a taste, as tender a conscience, and as much humility, as the apostle had, we should better understand, and enter into his views and feelings, in this remarkable portion of Scripture.

If, however, he had attained to that degree of devoted obedience to Christ, zeal for his glory, and delight in his service, which has been described, was he not tempted to self-preference, and to trust in his own righteousness? My brethren, self-righteousness is one kind of pride, but humility is a principal part of ho-

liness; and can increasing humility render the christian proud? Love of Christ, and a proper state of heart towards him, are essential to holiness, especially that of a redeemed sinner: and can the Saviour become less precious in any respect to him, as he becomes more holy? It is probable, that no man on earth ever entered more fully than the apostle into the meaning and force of those words in this epistle—"I "count all but loss for the excellency of the know-"ledge of Christ Jesus—that I may win Christ and "be found in him,—having the righteousness of God "by faith:" yet the enraptured host before the throne, who, perfected in holiness, sing "Worthy is the "LAMB that was slain," enter still more deeply into the import and force of them, than even the apostle himself did when imperfect here on earth.

It will, I doubt not, be allowed, that Christianity is for substance what it was of old: and if so, no man is a real christian, who is not, at least in the habitual aim and purpose of his heart, and the general tenour of his conduct, a follower of the apostle in this particular. Yet few, very few indeed, can adopt his words, "To me to live is Christ," in that strong meaning, and with that full propriety, with which he used them. And though it is not improbable, that the subject has reminded many present of our dear departed friend; yet even he would have been very far from applying the words to his own case, without many concessions and deductions. The connexion, however, between the two parts of our text is inseparable: no man can reasonably hope that death will be gain to him, any further than he has a consciousness,

and can give good evidence, that "to him to live is "Christ." Let no man then deceive himself; as all do who expect the christian's crown, while they neither bear his character, nor sustain his conflict. I proceed therefore—

II. To consider the other proposition of my text—"To me to die is gain." "To die!"—How much is contained in these short words, which we often speak and hear with little attention or emotion! yet who can express their momentous and awful import? "O death, where is thy sting?"—To die, is at once to be torn from all the possessions, distinctions, enjoyments, and endeared connexions of life! to lose in a moment every thing that a man has contrived and laboured for all his days. To die, renders his genius and wisdom, his exertions and success of no further avail to him. It rends asunder the bonds of friendship and the nearest ties of relationship. It separates the parent from his child, the minister from his flock, the wife from her husband, the friend from him who was to him as his own soul. 'Till death us do part,' is an affecting memento, even when we enter into the conjugal relation, how it must at last be dissolved. And can death be gain!

To die is to suffer either lingering and tedious pain and langour, or the acute, and in general more dreaded, anguish of sudden or violent dissolution. These bodies, which we are too prone to idolize, must then become lifeless clay, a prey to corruption and the reptiles of the earth: "Dust thou art, and to dust shalt "thou return." The countenance, which was scarcely ever beheld without sensible pleasure, can then no

longer be endured. "Bury my dead," even my beloved Sarah, "out of my sight." And can death be gain!

"The living know that they must die:" and the forebodings of the approaching certain stroke, connected with the uncertainty of the time, form too important a part of its terror to be passed over in silence; especially as the great business of life, to numbers, is to exclude reflection, and to escape these forebodings.

But further, "Man dieth, and where is he?" To die implies also, in this view of the subject, ideas from which the mind naturally revolts—Few, very few can escape the conviction of a future retribution beyond the grave. Even profligates, blasphemers, and avowed infidels, on some occasions, betray their distrust of their own principles, and shew that they dread something beyond the grave. What that something is, cannot be known without revelation: but as the worst evil that we know of comes on us all in this world, the uncertain conjecture is replete with terror.

It is not for man to know, except by revelation, whether a God of infinite justice will shew mercy to criminals; or whether he can do it, without dishonouring himself; and, in case he can and will pardon, to what extent, and in what way, mercy shall be extended. When excess has ruined a man's constitution, or extravagance has squandered away his estate, repentance itself fails to reinstate him in health or in affluence: and the delinquent against the laws of his country is not entitled to a pardon by repenting, but must notwithstanding atone for his crimes by suffer-

ing the denounced penalty, unless his sovereign by an act of free mercy prevent it. How then can we attain any confidence that repentance will ensure forgiveness from God, or exempt us from future punishment?

In this state of uncertainty, which would excite more anxious enquiries, if it were not for the inconsideration and presumption of mankind, the Scriptures address us: yet many of the declarations, which first awaken the attention of the careless, are suited exceedingly to increase the alarm. "The wrath of "God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness "and unrighteousness of men." "It is appointed "for men once to die, and after death the judgment." "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the "people that forget God." "Cursed is every one "that continueth not in all things written in the book "of the law to do them." "Depart accursed into "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "These shall go away into everlasting "punishment," "Where their worm dieth not, and "their fire is not quenched."

"Life and immortality, indeed, are brought to light "by the gospel:" but till that gospel is understood and embraced, the assurance that the soul is immortal, that the body shall rise again, and that there will be a future judgment, and a state of eternal retribution, must excite increasing apprehensions, in all who duly attend to the important subject, and compare their lives with the holy law of God.

Viewed, therefore, on every side, death is *the king of terrors*, to all but the true christian; and not to fear

death, when its consequences are daily weighed, is more properly to be termed *madness* than *courage*. Indeed deliberate superiority to the fear of death is far less common than may be supposed. There have been military men of most approved courage, who were free to own that this was not their case: but that, in seasons of the greatest danger, they were so occupied with other thoughts, that they had no leisure to think about dying. Men intoxicated by pride and ambition, or rendered desperate by vexations and furious passions, may hurry into extreme danger, or even on certain death, without reflection: yet the same persons, when attacked by wasting disease, informed of their danger, and left in solitude to reflect on their situation, often feel that dread of death, which before seemed to be extinguished; and cherishing vain hopes, cling to life, just like other men.

And though the consideration, that death is the wages of sin, and the infliction of a sentence denounced against man for disobedience, (and not a matter of course or a debt of nature, as men generally speak,) is seldom duly attended to: yet, when seriously weighed, it is suited still more to shew that death is indeed a dreadful enemy.

If God inexorably inflicts that sentence on the body, which he in just displeasure denounced; will he not prove inexorable in respect of the sentence of everlasting punishment, which hangs over the immortal soul? And shall we not "fear him who is able to "destroy both body and soul in hell?"

And can death, the king of terrors, the dire conqueror and destroyer of our race, be deprived of his

armour, nay, be changed into a friend? Can that stroke, which seems to cause the loss of all things, become our gain? This, this, my brethren, is the peculiar triumph of the gospel. To every true believer death is gain, the richest gain. And what can worldly wisdom, or even philosophy, propose, worthy of being put into competition with this unspeakable benefit?

You will observe, however, my brethren, that I do not say, every true believer can adopt the apostle's language of full assurance, "To me to die is gain." "I have a desire to depart." Alas! few, very few indeed, if any, are so diligent, so zealous, so self-denying, so dead to the world, and so heavenly-minded, as he was; and in proportion, their evidence, that the blessing belongs to them, is less clear, and their assurance cannot on scriptural grounds be so high and unwavering. The degree also in which to die is the christian's gain, is proportioned to that of his growth in grace and fruitfulness; for "one star differeth from "another star in glory." Yet every one, who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, is both an heir of heaven, and made meet for heaven, and death will certainly be his gain; the only difficulty lies in determining whether we have the true faith, which works by love, and is inseparable from repentance, and all those "things "which accompany salvation."

We may consider the christian's life after conversion, in respect of the following particulars:

1. He has troubles and sorrows in common with other men, from which death will finally deliver him, and so be his gain. "In thy life-time thou hast had

" thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things, " but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." Jesus did not come into the world, and die on the cross, to save us from temporal suffering, but from sin, and from the wrath to come. His disciples, therefore, are often left to feel the suffering of poverty, sickness, and pain; the sorrows of domestick losses, and of publick calamities. " Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward:" no condition in life is exempt; every one is ready to complain of his peculiar trials; and, as this is the case, we need only add, that the christian has at least his full share of the troubles which are common to man; but at death God delivers him from them all: while to the unbelieving these are but " the beginning of sorrows," and of eternal weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Indeed to be ' delivered from the miseries of this ' evil world,' if known to be separable from the miseries of another world, is generally allowed to be gain, even independently of that eternal felicity reserved for the righteous. So that, in very many instances, life is desired, not so much for its enjoyments, as from a secret dread of the consequences of death. ' I know where I am now, but I know, not where I shall be when I die, was the expressive answer of an aged sufferer, to the enquirer, Why he was anxiously desirous of life? though he owned its pains were far greater than its enjoyments. What an affecting condition is such a man reduced to! what a relief would the faith and hope of the christian bring to his mind!

Sometimes, however, the pressure of suffering, on a stout rebellious spirit is so heavy, that in desperate unbelief, as regardless of consequences, the poor

wretch is urged on by the first murderer, the devil, madly to rush on death for deliverance. But the believer assaulted, as Job was under his complicated sufferings, by the same temptation, answers "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change "come." He has indeed his sorrows, and often exceedingly heavy trials; but he has also comforts and supports peculiar to himself, which enable him to bear up under them all.

2. But the christian has sufferings to which others are strangers, and from which death will deliver him, and thus prove his great gain. "In the world ye "shall have tribulation." The world will hate or scorn the devoted servants of Jesus Christ; yet they have the same feelings as other men, and the same natural dislike to be despised, calumniated, insulted, and persecuted. The circumstance, that a christian's "foes are those of his own house," often infuses additional bitterness into his cup of sorrow. He cannot but lament to see his dearest relatives, whose welfare lies near his heart, evidently treading the broad road to destruction. When he has bestowed all the affectionate pains he can for their best interest, they frequently send him away "to weep in secret places for their pride.' He looks around, and sometimes "rivers of water run down his eyes, because men keep not the divine law," and neglect the salvation of the Gospel. He has "a heart of flesh," and cannot but mourn with those that mourn; as the Saviour wept at the grave of Lazarus, as well as over the devoted inhabitants of Jerusalem. The calamities of families and of nations; the divided and corrupted state of

the church; the prevalency of heresy and impiety; the triumphs of infidels and deceivers, and a world lying in the wicked one, are to him sources of frequent sorrow; and the language of profaneness is as a sword in his bones, "while men say, Where is now thy God?"

Thus he "groans, being burdened;" but especially his heart knoweth its own bitterness, in respect of his sins, conflicts, and temptations. He often finds his former sins called to remembrance, and reflects on them anew with deep remorse and self-abasement, especially when he witnesses any of their evil consequences. Alas! he has frequently still to mourn with godly sorrow and inward anguish, because he has contracted fresh guilt, and ungratefully offended his heavenly Father.—Sometimes he is thus led to fear, lest he has hitherto deceived himself; and, having grieved his gracious Comforter, he is left in darkness, under rebukes and chastenings to bewail his folly, and is thus brought back with weeping and supplication. But it is well, if he pass through life without, in some degree, rejoicing the hearts of the wicked by more grievous falls, and thus causing the name of God to be blasphemed: and if preserved from this most deplorable evil, and a stranger to that anguish which must permanently be felt by those who have thus fallen and been graciously recovered, he has been kept by "fearing always," and so constantly crying for help to God. These fears, however, are a deduction from his comforts, though they conduce to his safety.

So long as the christian lives in this world, sin dwells within him, whether it prevail against him, or not; and the more he delights in the law of God, and

longs to be perfectly holy, and consequently the more he hates sin; the greater uneasiness will he experience from its presence in his heart, and the risings of evil desires and passions, which will mingle with his best obedience. The less they defile him, being exceedingly detested, the more will they distress him. The more he longs to obey as angels do, the greater grief will he feel, that "when he would do good evil is present with him." This, this will cause the complaint, which persecutors cannot extort, and make even the advanced christian mournfully exclaim, "Oh wretched man that I am! "who shall deliver me?"

It would take me too far to speak of his temptations from the powers of darkness, which at times are exceedingly distressing; and make him perceive the important meaning of the apostle's words, "Our mer- "ciful and faithful High-priest, who can be touched "with the feeling of our infirmities, suffered being "tempted, that he might be able to succour them that "are tempted." In short, he has seasons of disconsolation, conflict, and inward distress; he has fears, and sorrows, and difficulties, which are known to God alone: and though by faith and prayer he is carried above all, and is often enabled to rejoice in God; yet he cannot but long for a more settled state, an uninterrupted enjoyment; and death, by which his Saviour in the appointed hour will terminate the conflict, must prove his greatest gain. He then "enters into peace." "There the wicked cease from troubling, there the "weary are at rest." There says he, in delightful expectation,

'Sin, my worst enemy before,
'Shall vex my eyes and ears no more,
'My inward foes shall all be slain,
'Nor Satan break my peace again.'

My beloved brethren, we do not know what we shall be, but we have some knowledge of what we shall not be. When arrived at heaven we shall have no sorrow, fear, or shame. We shall be eternally exempted from all that here makes us weep, and groan, and tremble. We shall have done for ever with sin and temptation: we shall have no bad companions, or uneasy passions. We shall "hunger no more, neither "thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on us, "or any heat. For the LAMB that is in the midst of "the throne shall lead us forth besides the living "fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all "tears from our eyes."

3. But the christian has his comforts as well as his sorrows in this world. He has the ordinary comforts of life; and while he would not overvalue them, neither would he by any means despise them: nay, a spirit of dependence on his heavenly Father, united with submission and gratitude, and moderation in all things, render even temporal comforts far more pleasant to him than they can be to ungodly men. "A little that "the righteous hath, is better than the treasures of "many wicked." A consistent conduct also in domestick life, and among relatives and neighbours, seldom fails in time to ensure a man respect and affection in his private circle. The world may hate and revile, but those, with whom he spends most of his hours, will add to his comfort by kindness and affec-

tion. The storm rages without, but there is peace within; he takes sweet counsel with his friends in a secure retreat, and disregards its blustering.

But though these are sources of considerable comfort in this present world; yet even in this respect, to die is the christian's gain. Good roads, agreeable companions, an easy conveyance, fine weather, a pleasant country, and convenient accommodations, are great advantages in travelling; yet domestick men, whose hearts are at home with their beloved families, do not choose to travel merely for the sake of these accommodations; but take the comfort of them, dispatch their business, press forward with all convenient speed, and rejoice when they arrive at their journey's end.

Thus the christian's home, his treasure, and his heart are in heaven; above all, his beloved Saviour is there: and, though he is very thankful for all his temporal mercies, yet as far as faith and hope prevail, he considers it far better "to depart hence and to be "with Christ;" and even "to be absent from the "body that he may be present with the Lord." He loves his relatives and friends with cordial affection: yet he longs for that state in which all these affections will be swallowed up, or rather perfected, in those of a still more exalted kind. He desires to be in that world, where "they neither marry nor are given in "marriage, but are as the angels of God." He leaves those whom he most loves to the care of his heavenly Father; and when death is about to separate him from them, he rejoices in hope of a re-union ere long in the regions of unchangeable felicity. He is taken from

the company of the saints below, who are "the ex-"cellent of the earth, in whom is all his delight:" but he goes to join the saints in light, "the spirits of "just men made perfect, and an innumerable compa-"ny of angels;" in "the presence of God, where is "fulness of joy, and pleasures at his right hand for "evermore:" and so strong is this attraction, that frequently it is observed to overcome and loosen those ties of long-cemented affection, which before seemed indissoluble.

4. The christian, however, even on earth has blessings superior to all his outward comforts. He has "peace and joy in believing." Sometimes "his soul "is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, while his "mouth praises God with joyful lips." His "fellow-"ship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ;" he experiences the strong consolations of the Holy Spirit, "rejoices in hope," and often, can also "re-"joice in tribulation:" yea, he rejoices in his unseen but beloved Saviour "with joy unspeakable and full "of glory." He "delights himself in God," he "de-"lighteth greatly in his commandments:" and has earnests and foretastes of heaven in this present world. These are satisfactions which he most values, and which render him happier than other men, notwithstanding all his peculiar conflicts and trials: yet these especially assure him, that "to him to die is gain." For, my brethren, if such joy spring up in the heart from a transient glimpse, so to speak, of the light of God's countenance; what will the beatifick vision be, the full discovery of his glory and the enjoyment of his love! The branch of Canaan's grapes carried into

the wilderness, where were no vineyards at all, was well suited to render the believing Israelites eager and almost impatient to possess the promised land. Alas! too often through our own unwatchfulness, we indeed experience but transiently, and with many interruptions, these holy joys; our strongest comforts are always imperfect and of comparatively short continuance: and a succession of joys and sorrows is all we can here attain to. But, when "absent from the "body and present with the Lord," we shall have unclouded skies, our Sun will always shine. "We shall "see him," even our God and Saviour, "as he is, and "be made like him."

What a transition from the languor, pain, and suffering of a death-bed, to joys unspeakable, inconceivable, uninterrupted, and eternal!

Methinks, I hear the enraptured spirit exclaim, 'I 'thought, and read, and heard much, and I antici- 'pated much of glorious joy while I was on earth, 'and raised my conceptions and expectations as high 'as I possibly could: "but the half," the thousandth 'part, "was not told me." Well might the prophets 'and apostles say, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear "heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the "things which God hath prepared for them that love "him." 'I believed, that to die would be gain: but I 'never could have conceived the immensity of that 'gain! "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!"

I am persuaded, my brethren, that few, if any, present are disposed to doubt, but that our departed friend, whose decease gave occasion to our present assembling, is now actually possessing this gain, and

presenting these praises; and is blessed beyond all our powers of conception. It remains therefore, that I conclude with some application of the subject to this recent event, the source of much sorrow to many present, but of such unutterable joy to him, the loss of whom we are now lamenting.

My acquaintance with your beloved and revered pastor, was of too short continuance, to enable me to do, what perhaps some may expect; namely, attempt a delineation of his character. But I was led to choose this text, under an idea, that you would think of him as I proceeded: and, remembering his conduct among you during a term of fifteen or sixteen years, would almost involuntarily apply the several particulars to him; convinced, that in good measure he was a follower of the apostle, even as the apostle followed Christ. From my little intercourse with him, and from all I have heard concerning him, I am induced to believe, that most of the ministers of Christ, even such as are well known and justly approved, might have looked up to him, as an edifying pattern, in humility, meekness, patience, unwearied disinterested diligence, faithful love to the souls of men, especially those intrusted to his immediate care, and zeal for the honour of his God and Saviour. "To him, indeed, to live was Christ, "and to die was gain."

But I shall not enlarge. He lives, I doubt not, in the hearts of many present. You, my christian brethren, have no need of my commendations of him: You are his best commendation: "The seals of his minis- "try are ye in the Lord." May your future lives, conformed to his scriptural instructions and his edify-

ing example, recommend his memory, and all his words and actions (that will no doubt be long recollected in this neighbourhood,) to your children, your families, and all with whom you have to do. "Remember him "that was guide over you, who spake to you the word "of God; whose faith follow; considering the end of "his conversation," and his happy entrance into the joy of his Lord. You best knew his excellency—Oh, copy his example, and more and more reduce to practice his instructions, that "by well doing ye may put to "silence those who falsely accuse your good conversa- "tion in Christ."

But he also lives in the consciences of numbers, who have not hitherto effectually profited by his labours. Oh that his death may be made more useful to you, than his life has been! I appeal to all present, who have had personal knowledge of our deceased friend, that "he commended himself to your consciences in the "sight of God." You knew him to be an upright, peaceable, kind hearted, and pious man. You knew his life was consistent with his profession, and the instructions and admonitions which he gave to others. You are conscious that he would have done you good, if he could; and that, had you followed his counsels and example, you would at this time have been far better men than you are. You are sensible, that even his reproofs, and warnings, and opposition to your sins, were the dictates of love to your souls. Yes—"He sought not yours, but you." "He was willing to "spend and be spent for you; though the more he lov- "ed you, the less he was loved of you." Indeed it seems probable that he wore himself out prematurely

by his incessant labours, and chiefly for your salvation. And I am confident, that there is scarcely one present, who, if he thought he should die this night, would not secretly wish, and even be ready to say, "Oh, that I may go to be where Mr. Newell is!" This is the highest commendation: and this you cannot withhold from him. I have no design to panegyrize. I can do our brother no good. He needs not our praise: he enjoys the honour that cometh from God only. He has heard his gracious Saviour say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou "into the joy of thy Lord." But I speak what I am confident is true, and what I hope may be of use to you: and many present will say, 'You might with truth have said far more of him.' And one thing more I will add. He was to the last, most evidently and deeply conscious of his sinfulness, and simply trusted only in the Saviour's righteousness, atonement, and mediation, as the sole ground of his hope of eternal life: and, (which I especially marked in him,) he was peculiarly willing to sit down in the lowest place among his brethren, in honour preferring others to himself; and, though "apt to teach," he was ever ready and glad to learn, with childlike teachableness and simplicity.

I doubt not but there were flaws in his character observable by those who were intimate with him; but they did not fall under my notice: and I am persuaded, his most accurate observers saw nothing inconsistent with what has been stated, or with our Lord's commendation of Nathaniel; "Behold an Israelite indeed, in "whom there is no guile." In one particular, how-

" ever, I am apt to think he was in some degree faulty; I mean, that in some respects, he carried his disinterestedness to far, and while he was " willing to suffer " all things," and give up his right " rather than hin- " der the gospel of Christ;" he acted so entirely on this principle, that it may be questioned, whether he did not intrench on that duty, which ministers as well as other men owe to their own families. I trust, you will give me credit, that I am no advocate for ministers being tenacious of their utmost due: nor should I have touched on so delicate a subject; but to turn your thoughts to the family of our deceased brother; and to hint to you, that his amiable disinterestedness should stimulate every one to come forward decidedly to propose and support such measures as may prevent their feeling the effects of it, in addition to their present heavy affliction: as also to encourage others, who are labouring in the sacred ministry, and who cannot but sometimes feel anxiety about their families, for whom they can make no provision, except by neglecting their proper work, or throwing a bar in the way of their own usefulness.

It is allowed, that this anxiety arises from weakness of faith: for, that God, who wrought a miracle in the days of Elisha, to rescue the widow and children of his deceased servant, one of the sons of the prophets, from the consequence of his unavoidably leaving his family, not only unprovided for, but in debt, still liveth; and he can provide for his people and their families by ordinary means as readily as by miracle: for, as the earth and its fulness are the Lord's, so all hearts are in his hands, and he, as " our heavenly Father, knoweth

" what things we and our's have need of." No doubt our departed brother seemed, (when at any time, his thoughts recurred to this interesting subject,) to hear the Lord say " Leave thy fatherless children, and I will " preserve them alive; and let thy widow trust in me:" " and no doubt blessings, in answer to his many prayers, are in reserve for them. Yet, this my brethren, does not alter our duty: our God works by means and instruments; and every one of us should count it an honour and a privilege, to be employed in promoting so good a work. " The liberal deviseth liberal things, and " by liberal things shall he stand."

Many persons, on these occasions, have much curiosity to hear what the deceased spake, and what was the measure of his confidence and joy in the closing scene: and indeed this is very natural; and in many instances the last words of eminent christians prove very useful to survivors. We have, however, little comparatively recorded in Scripture in this respect. Of the manner in which Abraham and Samuel, Isaiah and Daniel, James and Peter, and many other illustrious characters in both Testaments, left this world, we know nothing: and indeed, in general the most important enquiry is, ' How men live?' except there be any thing in the manner of their death, peculiarly different from the tenour of their lives. Had our dear friend been taken away by a sudden stroke, or rendered at once incapable of speaking; it would not in the smallest degree have weakened my confidence respecting him. " He walked with God, and he was not: for God took him." His disease was of that nature which precluded much discourse; but he was calm and resigned; he expressed

the same confidence in the mercy of God through Christ Jesus, which he had preached to others, and intimated that he was well satisfied and comfortable.

In applying our subject to this congregation, I shall address myself to some, I hope many, present, as persons who highly valued, and profited by, the labours of our deceased brother, and who therefore cannot but feel that his gain appears to be their heavy loss. It is indeed a case that demands our sympathy and condolence: but it also demands our submission to the wisdom and sovereign will of God. "He gave, and he "hath taken away, and blessed be his holy name."

You have abundant cause for gratitude, that the Lord was pleased to send his messenger of peace among you, and that he hath of his special mercy inclined and taught you to embrace the gracious invitation to be reconciled to God; and if you can indeed say, "To me "to live is Christ," no doubt you will in the event be satisfied, that even the removal of your minister was rendered subservient to your advantage. "For we know that all things "work together for good to "them that love God, to them who are the called ac- "cording to his purpose." And the Saviour says virtually to you on this occasion, as he once did to Peter, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt "know hereafter." He liveth, and because he liveth ye shall live also. "He, who has the keys of death "and the eternal world," hath taken his servant home to himself; but he has the fulness of the Spirit: "He "holds the stars in his right hand," and he is able to make up every loss, even such a loss as we are apt to think irreparable.

You, my brethren, will no doubt on recollection be conscious, that you have not so fully profited by your advantages, as to have no cause on that account to humble yourselves before God, and to consider this dispensation as a fatherly rebuke for not duly valuing and improving his mercies. Accept therefore, I pray you, the word of exhortation, while I entreat you to consider your ways, to take this occasion of renewedly humbling yourselves before God, accepting of his salvation, and devoting yourselves to his service. And then unitedly to beseech "the God of the spirits "of all flesh" to place over you a faithful, able, and affectionate pastor, instead of his dear servant whom he hath taken away from you. Let not local circumstances, which may seem to make it probable, and almost certain, that this will be the case, render you forgetful, that you are notwithstanding entirely dependent on God, nay, as entirely as if the probability lay wholly the other way. The enemy of your souls will spare no pains to defeat any plans concerted for your good, and the Lord only can prevent his success. The hearts of men are known to him alone, and the wisest and best of men may err in the choice they make: they may not be able to obtain a person exactly suited to the situation, or the person appointed may fail of answering the expectations reasonably formed of him. Faith and prayer, therefore, are your only resources: you should with David say, "Truly "my expectation is only from the LORD, from whom "cometh my salvation." And if a minister should be placed over you, in answer to your united and fervent prayers; and you should continue to pray for him,

and to watch against all prejudices, which are apt on such occasions to intrude, and all endeavours to disunite you; and should encourage him, by your converse, example, and attention to his ministry; you may hope that he will daily be rendered more and more a proper instrument for the work; and that you and your families and neighbours also will have to say, with increasing satisfaction, the Lord "hath done "all things well!"

But I fear, I am addressing a large number, who are conscious, that they have not thus profited by the labours of the deceased; and that they have no right to say, "To me to live is Christ." It is probable you feel sorrow very little proportioned to your late loss; but your case is, on that very account, far more to be deplored. A minister of the gospel is the Lord's ambassador, a messenger of peace and reconciliation. Often has your deceased pastor "Besought you in Christ's "stead to be reconciled to God," I doubt not many times with tears as well as prayers; but the love of the world, aversion to religion, and an unhumbled spirit, have hitherto influenced you to "refuse him "that spake to you;" and you are still in your sins, carnally minded, and enmity against God. He has now recalled his ambassador, which you know is the general preparation for a declaration of war. But, my fellow-sinner, "Hast thou an arm like God? And "canst thou thunder with a voice like his?" Why then dost thou venture on the unequal contest? Take care lest the owner of the vineyard, in which thou hast hitherto stood a barren fig-tree, now, no longer prevented by the intreaties of the vine-dresser, should

give the command—"Cut it down, why cumbereth "it the ground?" Alas! such persons have little reason to hope, that death would be their gain. "For "the wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but "the righteous," and he alone, "has hope in his "death."—But beware also, lest any of you should now be left to judicial hardness; to be deluded by false doctrine; or to give up all regard to the ordinances of God, which attachment to an individual sometimes induces many to attend on, who forsake them when that inducement ceases, and rush into vice when the restraint is withdrawn. But could your late minister once more address you from this place, what language do you think he would now adopt? Would he not say, "Draw near to God, and he will draw "near to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and "purify your hearts, ye double-minded: Be afflicted, "and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned "into mourning, and your joy into heaviness; hum-"ble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that "he may exalt you in due time." "Seek the Lord "while he may be found: Call upon him while he "is near." "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, har-"den not your hearts." "Repent and believe the "Gospel." "Repent and be converted, that your "sins may be blotted out." "Believe in the Lord "Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "How will "you escape, if you neglect so great salvation?" "Fear, lest a promise being left you of entering into "his rest, any of you should seem to come short of "it." "Give diligence to make your calling and "election sure." "Take heed, lest you should have a

"name to live, and be dead." "Cleave to the Lord "with full purpose of heart;" "Walk with him in all "his ordinances and commandments;" "Prepare to "meet thy God:" and "give all diligence that you may "be found of him in peace, without spot and blame-"less."

Should he, I say, come again to you from the dead; could he address you in any language more suitable, than that of these exhortations of the holy prophets and the apostles of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Thus he hath often exhorted you; thus he would again exhort you; nay, being dead, he thus speaketh to you: thus the surviving ministers address you, as with one voice; and the loving Saviour of sinners himself assures you, that "if you believe not Moses and the "prophets, neither would you be persuaded, though "one arose from the dead."

A

BRIEF MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. JEREMIAH NEWELL,

LATE VICAR OF GREAT MISSENDEN, BUCKS.

AS the author of the ensuing narrative had no personal acquaintance with Mr. Newell, till the last year of his life; he cannot be expected to furnish many particulars from his own knowedge: for the only conversation, which he ever had with him, was wholly engrossed by the unspeakably important concerns of the sacred ministry, in which they were both engaged.

The materials also, from which a biographical narrative must be composed, are very slender; indeed more so than was expected.

Mr. Jeremiah Newell was born at Llandewey, Radnorshire, on Dec. 27, 1755. His father, Mr. Robert Newell, a farmer in comfortable circumstances, of that place, is still living, a consistent christian character. His mother was the niece of the Rev. Vavasor Griffiths,* by whom she had been brought up. Her name was Sarah Woolley.

They were both pious persons, and endeavoured to bring up their son, an only child, "in the nurture and "admonition of the Lord." The chief care of his edu-

---

* See a pious and sensible letter from him to his students, on parting with them, in the Evangelical Magazine, August, 1800, page 317.

cation, however, devolved on his mother; and as she had been well instructed in the most useful parts of general knowledge; as she knew the value of early tuition in her own case; and as she not only engaged in this important and delightful office from tender affection to her only child, but from the genuine principles of vital christianity; it could perhaps scarcely have been left in better hands. Indeed it appears that he himself had, to the end of life, such a sense of his obligations to his honoured parent, for her attention to his education, and the judicious and pious manner in which she instructed him; that he ascribed his subsequent success in his studies, and usefulness in the ministry, chiefly, under God, to her endeavours: and many other competent judges, who had abundant opportunity of making their observations, concurred with him in this opinion. He accordingly continued in his father's house, and never went to any school or academy, till his nineteenth year: yet his general knowledge, and his unusual attainments for such a situation joined to his early piety and acquaintance with the scripture, attracted the attention of several ministers and other respectable persons, who frequently visited his parents; and they concurred in opinion, that he had talents, which, with the improvement and polish of a measure of learning, would qualify him for important usefulness. As for himself, his modesty, which bordered on the extreme, precluded his entertaining any such thought. Hitherto he had employed himself in the business of his father's farm; though at times his mind aspired after more intellectual pursuits, and he had thoughts of applying himself to the study of medicine.

When, however, the unexpected opinion of those, to whom he had been accustomed to look up with veneration, suggested and encouraged the idea of the sacred ministry; and he was led to conclude, that he might think of that "good work" without presumption; it soon acquired the preponderancy in his pious mind, and gave a decisive turn to his future life; though it was far from opening to him the best prospect of worldly advantage.

But here let the reader pause for a moment, and turn his thoughts to a subject of great importance; or rather two subjects intimately connected with each other: namely, the importance of maternal duty, in this respect, not only as to daughters, or sons while very young, or such as are to move in very inferior stations; but even in forming the minds and principles of such, as may eventually fill up the most useful stations in the church and in the community: and the importance of female education, that mothers may be qualified for the discharge of so high a trust. It is not, perhaps, going too far to say, that, under God, men are in no small degree, what women make them, as their influence is at all times incalculable: but the present observation only relates to maternal influence in the earlier part of life. Youth is the time for learning and for remembering: that which first occupies the mind and memory generally keeps the longest possession; and most thinking men have permanently to regret, or to rejoice in, the ideas received and the principles imbibed, during the first eight or ten years of their lives. Now these eight or ten years are frequently spent, in great measure, under the care of the mother: and, it

is probable, they would in almost all cases be thus spent, if mothers were but universally qualified for the charge, and took delight in it.

It seems evident, as far as human probability reaches, that Mr. Newell would never have thought of the ministry, or been thought of for it, had it not been for his pious mother's unwearied instructions; and consequently his usefulness in that line would have been prevented: but how could she have instructed him, so as without any other tuition, to cause him to attract the attention of those, whom the event shews to have judged aright, had she not herself been well educated?

But we may appeal to higher and more incontestable authority. Who can doubt but that the early and occasional instructions of pious Hannah were, by the blessing of God, highly conducive in forming Samuel for the eminent stations and most extensive usefulness of his subsequent life? In these no doubt Elkanah concurred: yet Hannah is much more noticed; she had received her son, as "asked of God;" she devoted him to God, and was no doubt useful in forming his tender mind to those views and principles, which preserved him from contamination in Eli's family, and by Eli's sons; to whose impiety and licentiousness, the indolence and timidity of their despised father opposed a very inadequate barrier.

It is, however, still more evident, that the pious endeavours of Lois and Eunice, the grandmother and mother of young Timothy, in bringing him when a child acquainted with the holy Scriptures, laid the foundation of all his subsequent eminence and useful-

ness, in which he was inferior to none but the apostles themselves. It is probable, that while they were teaching the child to read, and treasure up in his memory the oracles of God, they little thought what a harvest in future life would spring from the seed thus sown. And yet the scripture warrants high expectations in this respect: and it may fairly be said, that the education of women in useful knowledge and genuine piety, in order that they might be qualified and disposed to instil good principles into the tender minds of children, would have the happiest effects towards reforming mankind, and diffusing the light of the gospel in the world. In the mean while, let those who wish their beloved offspring to be happy and useful, do what they can, diligently and patiently, with faith and prayer; and they will no doubt have to rejoice, in time to come, over the happy effects of their pious labours.

This part of the subject has led us past the earlier years of Mr. Newell's life, without any other notice of them. Indeed no particulars have been transmitted, except that his parents were satisfied of his conversion and decided piety about the sixteenth year of his life; and in his nineteenth, it was determined that he should relinquish his employment in husbandry, and seek admission into the ministry. In order to this, he purposed, without longer delay, to acquire a measure of acquaintance with the learned languages: and, having made some attempts that did not promise much success, and that rather militated against his obtaining ordination in the established church, for which he had an early predilection, he was at length

placed under the tuition of the Rev. Mr. Jones, Vicar of Lanavan Fawr, Brecknockshire. In this situation he continued till he had entered on his twenty-fifth year; and, having the advantage of clear instructions, and applying himself diligently to his studies, he made very considerable proficiency; so that, without going to an university, he was approved as a candidate for holy orders, by the Right Rev. Dr. North, Lord Bishop of Worcester, and, receiving from him letters dimissory, was ordained deacon by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Hereford, on a title given him by the Rev. James Stillingfleet, Prebendary of Worcester, on the 21st of May, 1780: and he was ordained priest by the Lord Bishop of Worcester on the 23d of June, 1782. Thus he became curate to Mr. Stillingfleet, in the parishes of Knightwick and Doddenham in Worcestershire, which he served about six years and a half: and about a year and a half after he had received deacon's orders, he obtained, in addition, the curacy of Lulsey, (about a mile distant from Knightwick,) from the Rev. John Cox, brother to Lord Somers. So that during five years, for a considerable part of each year, he performed three services every Lord's day, besides all the other duties of the three parishes: and there is reason to believe that his labours were not without success, in bringing sinners to "repentance towards God, and faith towards our "Lord Jesus Christ."

At the expiration of this term, Mr. Stillingfleet removed to the parish of St. John, Worcester, and Mr. Newell continued his curate in this new situation. Here at first he had many prejudices and disadvan-

tages to encounter, on various accounts, and was at times not a little discouraged; yet by persevering in his work and labour of love, manifesting an affectionate spirit, and setting an edifying example, he in less than two years obtained the respect and affection of numbers in the neighbourhood, and was exceedingly regretted when he left them.

In what light Mr. Stillingfleet regarded his curate, will best be known from his own voluntary testimony, in a letter to his widow. 'I had formed,' says he, 'an 'expectation of seeing once more, my former amiable 'and most valuable fellow labourer.—Inconceivably, 'and beyond all imagination happy, as I am fully per-'suaded poor dear Mr. Newell now is, freed from a bo-'dy of sin and death, and tasting largely of those plea-'sures which are at God's right hand for evermore: I 'cannot but lament his loss to you, to his children, to 'his friends, to the Church of Christ in general, and 'to his parish of Missenden in particular. A more 'simple-hearted, devoted, faithful minister there ne-'ver was; and Mr. Oldham, in my opinion, will be 'at a great loss to find his fellow for his successor.' Let this extract suffice: It redounds honour to both parties, and no further observations on it are at all needful.

While Mr. Newell continued Mr. Stillingfleet's curate at Worcester, he was very unexpectedly, and and without the smallest degree of application on his part, presented to the vicarage of great Missenden, Bucks, by James Oldham Oldham, Esq. on the recommendation of some respectable persons, who were

well acquainted with his character.* This took place in December, 1787,† and in this situation he continued till his death. In the year 1797, the perpetual curacy of Lee, a contiguous village, lapsing to the crown, the Lord Chancellor nominated Mr. Newell to it. But the income of the two parishes, for the short time during which he held both, was very inadequate to the laborious services which he performed.

---

* On this occasion the following remark is made, in a book which Mr. Newell kept for such purposes:—'When I reflect 'on the providence of God, and the many unexpected favours 'he has bestowed on me, I am constrained to say, "Thou pre-"ventest me with the blessings of thy goodness." My pre-'sentation to the vicarage of Missenden is a signal instance of 'the Lord's conferring unsought mercies upon me.—As the 'living was given me without solicitation, the comforts it af-'fords me are the sweeter, and the crosses I necessarily meet 'with, are easier born on that account.'

† 'December 16, 1787, I preached my first sermon in 'Missenden church. The text was, "Unto you is the word "of this salvation sent." (Acts xiii. 26.)—Some persons be-'trayed their ignorance,by ridiculing even the words of the text! 'And in the course of the following week, I was informed, 'that the boys would run along the street, shouting, "Unto "you is the word of this salvation sent!"—Could one have conceived such ignorance and profaneness to have existed in a land so favoured with the light of truth as this country has long been? Yet it is to be feared, that it is far from being a solitary instance in proof, that even in England, many of the people are "perish-"ing for lack of knowledge." It is remarkable, however, that several instances occurred, in which Mr. Newell, attending the dying beds of pious persons, in his subsequent ministry, was told, that this very sermon first excited in them serious thoughts about religion, and led them to enquire, "What must we do "to be saved?"

The actual receipt from the vicarage of Missenden, was less than 80l. per ann. and sometimes fell considerable short of that sum. And the curacy of Lee, when first he took it, brought in a mere trifle; but its value was gradually improved by Queen Anne's bounty, and the purchase of land with it: so that the last two years of his life, he seemed to himself advanced to comparative affluence, having received from his parishes about 120l. per ann.

For this stipend, after he obtained Lee, he preached, and performed the whole service three times every Lord's day; twice at Missenden, and once at Lee. In this village the service had before been very seldom and very irregularly performed, in general not much more than once in the month, and the church was consequently little attended: but when it became stated, he had the satisfaction to see a steady, increasing, and attentive congregation, with every indication of considerable usefulness.*

Besides this, he preached a lecture at Missenden on the Wednesday evening, and was unwearied in all other parochial duties, and in endeavours to promote the best interests of his flock. So that it is the opinion of several respectable persons, that his exertions were too much for him, and that his strength was not equal to his burdens.

---

* Mr. N. having obtained Lee, wrote thus:—'When the 'door is opened for preaching the Gospel, we are filled with 'lively hope, that some good will be done. The Lord having 'sent his word to Lee, some fruit is to be expected.' This was evidently his object, and leading desire; nor was it disappointed, for he lived to witness, and to note down, several remarkable instances of undeniable usefulness.

The important and useful labours of a parish minister afford few incidents suited to the purposes of biography. One week succeeds another, and brings with it the same or similar calls of duty, and gives occasion for exercises of patience, meekness, diligence, piety, and love, with little variety of circumstance; and frequently, the more estimable the character, the less is he known beyond his own circle, and the more uniform is the tenour of his life. In this way indeed, he gains affectionate friends by substantial usefulness, who love and venerate him as a father; and he gradually overcomes opposition and prejudice by good behaviour, and is respected even by such as do not love him: because all become convinced that he would be their friend, and that he willingly renounces his interest, ease, and indulgence, in hopes of doing them good.

This seems to have been the life of Mr. Newell, at Missenden, and this the history of his last fifteen years. He did not go so much from home, as some ministers do, and was not so well known in the metropolis, or at a distance; but he was always employed, and principally about the people committed to his charge.*

Yet his mind was expanded to take in the concerns

* The manuscript book above-mentioned, contains a number of cases, with the names and the outlines of the characters, of persons who either were first excited by Mr. Newell's ministry to attend to the concerns of their immortal souls, or who were his constant attendants, and considered him as their stated pastor and teacher; and many of these are very interesting. A considerable number he attended on their dying beds,

of genuine christianity, on the most enlarged scale; and the evangelizing of the heathen, as well as the promoting of evangelical and vital piety at home, seems to have been near his heart. Accordingly, being solicited in the name of the committee of the London Missionary Society, to preach one of their annual sermons; he undertook that service, and performed it, greatly to the satisfaction of the Committee and Society. But the weight with which so publick and important an attempt lay upon his mind; the pains which he took in preparation; and his exertions at the time, added to all his other cares and labours, seem to have been too much for his feeble frame. He had before been in a poor state of health, but he returned from London much worse. His stomach became incapable of retaining either medicine or nourishment; yet, after a while, his disorder appeared to give way to medical aid, and some hopes were entertained of his recovery. These, however, speedily vanished; he relapsed, and his dissolution took place June 11th, 1803, when he was aged forty-seven years.

---

and had great satisfaction concerning them; but many others are still living, and various circumstances forbid the writer to be more particular. It is, however, plain, that in respect of many, the surprising ignorance before alluded to, was dispersed; and the "people who sat in darkness, saw great light; and "to them who sat in darkness, and the shadow of death, light "had sprung up."

ON the 7th of November, 1782, Mr. Newell married Miss Ann Jones, the daughter of Mr. Wm. Jones, a respectable linen-draper at Shrewsbury, who, after the comforts of a cordial union, founded on and cemented by christian principles, for above twenty years, survives to lament her loss.

They had ten children, but only three survive: a son, aged nine years, and two daughters, one aged seven, the other six. Some circumstances, however, concerning their children, are worthy to be recorded; at least, they a good deal affected the writer on a recital, and will probably interest and affect the reader, especially if a parent, who has felt the anguish of losing his beloved offspring.—I shall give them below, in Mr. Newell's own words.*

* 'I had peculiar trials in my family about the time I came to 'reside at Missenden. When I left Worcester, I had three lit- 'tle daughters, the youngest of whom was just one year old; 'as these required a deal of attention, and Mrs. N.'s time was 'very much taken up in preparing for our departure, we sent 'the least to a friend in the country. We afterwards found 'that the spotted fever raged much in that neighbourhood; 'our little one took the infection, and after places were taken 'for the family in the stage, Mrs. N. was obliged to go and at- 'tend her. The child, after a severe illness, almost miracu- 'lously recovered. I brought my two eldest children to Missen- 'den; and on the morrow, a child of the friend at whose house 'I lodged, fell sick, whose disorder terminated in the spotted 'fever, and my children took the infection. Mrs. N. had but just 'arrived with the little emaciated creature from Worcester, 'when the other two were taken ill. The eldest, a fine lively 'girl, was suddenly cut down: the second was reduced almost 'to a skeleton, and though her life was then spared, her con-

When the reader has perused the annexed note, he will probably agree, that none but an affectionate parent can conceive the anguish which such a dispen-

---

'stitution was so debilitated, that in time she was very much 'deformed, and was to us a painful instance how God afflicts 'parents in the persons of their children. She lived in a lan-'guishing pitiable state till March 28, 1792, and then depart-'ed. I had often perplexed myself with such thoughts as 'these: What can be the design of God in continuing my poor 'child in a miserable existence so long? Can such afflictions be 'in mercy? I had heard of children who, at an early age, have 'given satisfactory evidence of their being called by grace; and 'I thought, Who can tell but the Lord may yet call my poor 'Charlotte, and give us the pleasure of hearing her call on the 'Lord? I will apply myself with more assiduity to instruct her 'in the great truths of the Gospel. Though but just past seven 'years old, I was happy to find that she soon got a general 'knowledge of the Gospel, and was often much affected when 'I talked to her of the dying love of Jesus. I once asked her 'if she prayed when alone? and what she said when she 'prayed? To which she replied, "I say, God be merciful to "me a sinner!" A few nights before her death, about midnight, 'we heard her pray. Some things we could not distinctly un-'derstand: but we heard her very distinctly repeat the publican's 'prayer, and say, 'I long to go to glory.'—"The LORD gave, "and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the "LORD."

1793.

'I was exercised this year with peculiar domestick trials. 'In the spring my youngest child had the scarlet fever, which 'weakened his constitution very much. In the summer they 'had the measles, of which the little one died. My three other 'children recovered, and enjoyed perfect health, till the latter 'end of November, when Ann was seized with the croup, and 'died December 1st; Robert took the infection, and died De-'cember 7: nor did the Lord see good to spare one, for Mary 'expired December 10. Thus he hath "broken me with breach

sation must excite, even in the most pious mind; and what great supports of divine grace are requisite to repress all murmurs and hard impatient thoughts on so trying an occasion, and to enable the sufferers to say, "It is the LORD, let him do what seemeth him "good."

They were, however, supported; and at length their three children (like the seven that Job lost at once) were replaced: but these are now left fatherless, with one further circumstance, which is peculiarly suited to excite sympathy, and seldom fails to produce this affect: I mean the expectation of a fourth child, doomed to be born fatherless, its mother being a widow. But the Father of the fatherless, and the Husband and Defender of the widow, still liveth, and is all-sufficient.

It is superfluous almost to say, that the deceased was exemplary in the character of a husband, a father, and in domestick life. They who knew him most, held him in the highest estimation.

As the writer never had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Newell preach, he cannot give any opinion on that subject, except a decided one that he preached the doctrines of the Scripture, and those of our Liturgy and articles, fairly and literally interpreted.

But he has heard from competent judges, that his language also was good, and that his manner was agree-

---

"upon breach," and "written me childless." I trust these 'sharp trials will be blessed to me; I daily pray that the Lord 'would raise me up spiritual children, in the stead of my chil-'dren according to the flesh, whom he hath taken to himself.'

able, and very impressive. Indeed, several superior persons in the neighbourhood, not previously favourable to some articles of his creed, on which he steadily insisted; by attending on his ministry, expressing great approbation of it, corresponding with him when living, and now shewing great respect to his memory, confirm this account of him.

But his unwearied labours, his disinterestedness, his peaceable conduct, his uniformly amiable and consistent example, (which his neighbours in general are disposed to testify) were in the sight of God of far higher value, than even his talents and endowments as a minister. And in the former he may be imitated by those who could not imitate him in the latter.

It does not appear that Mr. N. ever published any thing, except the sermon before the London Missionary Society, which is printed with the other sermons preached on the same occasion.

The following extracts from the book before cited, may give the reader a further insight into the labours, views, and spirit of the deceased, than could be communicated by a studied eulogium on his character.

'From the time I came to reside at Missenden, I 'wished to set up a lecture on the Sunday evenings, 'but was deterred for some time, thinking my strength 'was not adequate to reading prayers and preaching 'or expounding three times in the day. If, as some 'ministers have done, I had gone into the pulpit in 'the evening, without reading any prayers at all, there 'was every reason to expect that the people would be 'confirmed in their prejudices.—At length this expe-'dient struck my mind, I will put on the surplice,

'and read the prayer for the whole state of Christ's 'church militant here on earth, the Confession and 'Absolution out of the Communion-service, and con-'clude with one of the collects at the end of that ser-'vice; then I will go into the pulpit and expound. 'This plan I have adopted, and expound the Bible 'regularly every Sunday evening. As there is more 'history and narrative intermixed with the expositions 'than in sermons, many people seem more fond of 'attending at night than other parts of the day. I have 'often been so much fatigued on the Sunday-nights 'that I could scarcely walk down out of the pulpit; 'yet, through mercy, I have not found my health in-'jured by this additional labour. I hope the Lord 'will bless the expounding of the Scriptures, as a 'mean of giving the people a more general knowledge 'of his word.'

'On the 24th of October we set up the Sunday-'school. Unhappily for the good of the institution, 'the parishioners were divided respecting a teacher; 'therefore the farmers set up another school. I wish 'this division may not in the end defeat the purposes 'for which they were instituted.'

1791.

'Ever since my first coming to Missenden, I found 'it a difficult and disagreeable part of my pastoral du-'ty to visit the poor in the workhouse. If I called by 'day, few of them would be at home: if I visited them 'at night, they would be at supper, or gone to bed. 'I, this year, determined to visit them statedly every 'Thursday evening, read a sermon, and pray with 'them. This plan I find answers better than visiting 'them occasionally, but, through aversion to hear the

'word; it is attended with many difficulties. In the 'summer they will loiter about the fields, instead of 'returning home in proper time. In the winter they 'will feign themselves indisposed, and run to bed ra-'ther than stay to hear the word of God. They are 'just in the same spirit and temper as the Israelites, 'of whom the prophet complains. "They refused to "hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped "their ears that they should not hear; yea, they made "their hearts as an adamant-stone, lest they should "hear the words which the LORD of Hosts has sent "by his Spirit." O Lord make these poor hardened 'wretches a willing people in the day of thy power!'

1792.

'As the fever which carried off many was very con-'tagious, and I attended a number of my parishioners 'in every stage of the disorder, I have great reason to 'bless God, that when many fell on either side he 'graciously preserved me; but he that preserved Sha-'drach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the burning fiery 'furnace, delivered me out of this furnace of afflic-'tion.'

'I communicated my design to the people, of dis-'continuing the Sunday-evening-lectures, in a sermon 'from these words, "The spirit indeed is willing, "but the flesh is weak." I believe, I felt what I said, "and the people were affected and felt for me. Not 'being previously acquainted with my intentions, nor 'knowing that I felt so much difficulty in addressing 'them, their passions were sensibly wrought upon. 'Oh that it may have an abiding effect upon their 'hearts! If my successor should be inclined to under-

'take the labour which I have been obliged to relin-
'quish, I would have him sit down, and well count
'the cost before he begins. Besides the hard labour
'of preaching and reading prayers, he will have a deal
'of extra duty to perform. It is a custom at Missen-
'den to bury the dead generally on Sundays. I have
'had two buryings, two christenings, and two church-
'ings, in one Sunday: and sometimes I have been
'called to visit the sick. All this, added to the three
'services in the church, made me give up my lec-
'tures. As I had now made some progress in ex-
'pounding the scriptures, I determined to expound
'instead of preaching on the Wednesday evenings: I
'trust I shall not labour in vain.'

1793.

'I soon found that the people who attended them,'
'(that is, some extravagant preachers) 'had invented
'an easier way of going to heaven than I knew. They
'declare that a believer has nothing to do with the law.
'The law is no rule of life to them that are in Christ.
'It is legal to think it is. I now saw what was the
'luring bait by which poor simple souls were caught.
'May God deliver them from the fatal delusion!'

1794.

'He (a poor man in the congregation) 'brought me
'lately about a half a peck of very fine potatoes, and
'begged I would accept of them, adding, When you
'were explaining Moses's tabernacle, you told us that
'the person who brought a handful of goat's hair, or
'a badger's skin, was accepted with God, (if he
'brought it in faith,) as well as he who brought gold,
'silver, or precious stones.—'I do not know that I

'ever received a present, so thankfully as I received 'the poor man's potatoes.'

1796.

'It was a very trying circumstance to Mr. W. to 'be deprived of a considerable part of his property, 'owing to the blunder of an attorney: but the grand 'source of all his trouble was idleness. Had he been 'in any profession, or had he earned his bread by 'manual labour, he would have been comparatively 'a happy man. In his case, as well as that of many 'others, I perceive, a gentleman must have great 'grace indeed, to live to the glory of God.'

'Soon after I—'s death, some of his relations, who 'are papists, offered to take one of his children.— 'As they had educated one of his children by a for- 'mer wife, and brought her up a bigotted catholick, 'the widow knew that if she consented, her child 'would be a papist. She consulted me on the sub- 'ject: and I could not in conscience advise her to 'send her child into such a family, though it would 'relieve her from a heavy burden, and be much to the 'child's temporal advantage.—She thanked me for 'my advice, kept her child at home, struggles with 'her difficulties, and "hitherto the Lord hath helped "her."

I shall conclude this account by observing, that this advice and conduct appear to be thoroughly scriptural. The poor widow "sought" for her child, as well as for herself, "first the kingdom of God and his righ- "teousness, and trusted that all things else should be "added to her." It would be of vast importance to the interests of true religion, if all parents professing

themselves the disciples of Christ, received, and were decided, in following, such advice; when worldly advantages and religious advantages seem to come in competition, as to the education and disposal of their children.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT

THE PARISH CHURCH OF

ST. ANDREW BY THE WARDROBE, AND ST. ANNE, BLACKFRIARS;

On Tuesday in Whitsun Week, May 26, 1801.

BEFORE THE SOCIETY FOR MISSIONS TO AFRICA AND THE EAST.

INSTITUTED BY MEMBERS OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH, BEING

THEIR FIRST ANNIVERSARY.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned. Mark xvi. 16.

How then shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? Or how shall they hear without a preacher? Or how shall they preach except they be sent. Rom. x. 14, 15.

SERMON I.

EPHESIANS ii. 12.

At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

OF all the times, in which during many years I have been called to exercise my ministry, the present appears to me by far the most arduous and important: as it not only has respect to the eternal condition of the individuals which compose this auditory, and their immediate connexions; but as it is also especially intended to recommend an institution, which, though small in its beginnings, may, if properly conducted, and adequately supported, and graciously prospered, extend its beneficial consequences to remote regions and future ages. So that multitudes of whom we know nothing, nay, who have not yet received an existence, may ultimately be concerned in the present service.

If the blessings, derived from christianity, be so deeply needed, and so inestimably valuable, as its

zealous friends suppose the Scriptures to represent them; genuine Philanthropy alone might, one would suppose, induce us to communicate them, if possible, to such as still "sit in darkness and the shadow of "death." But besides the benumbing power of selfishness in its varied forms, and disregard to God and religion, compared with what are judged the personal or political interests of mankind; infidelity has diffused its contagion even among Christians: and the antiscriptural sentiment, that heathens, and Mahometans, and Jews, may be saved by their religions, if sincere in them, as well as Christians by their's, has cut the very sinews of exertion, and led men to undervalue the Gospel itself. But if this sentiment be true why were apostles and evangelists sent forth to preach to all nations? To what purpose their labours, sufferings and martyrdom? For what were they so zealous and earnest? Did they, or did they not, consider all men, of every nation, exposed to the wrath of God, under condemnation, and in danger of everlasting misery, from which they could not possibly be delivered, except by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? If this were their judgment, they acted consistently; and if this "judgment were according to truth," they acted with genuine wisdom and disinterested philanthropy, as well as ardent zeal for the glory of God. The language of their conduct may be expressed in the words of the apostle; "The same Lord over all is rich unto "all that call upon him: for whosoever shall call on "the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then "shall they call on him, on whom they have not be-"lieved? And how shall they believe in him of whom

" they have not heard? And how shall they hear with-
" out a preacher? And how shall they preach except
" they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful upon
" the mountains are the feet of them that preach the
" gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good
" things! So then faith cometh by hearing, and hear-
" ing by the word of God." And " without faith it is
" impossible to please God." But if this were not their view of the subject, their whole conduct is perfectly unaccountable: if they erred in judgment, they were left to act in a manner suited to mislead all men, through successive generations, who should look up to them as declaring the will of God to men, and illustrating it by their example. And who can help perceiving that this sentiment both represents the apostles as enthusiasts and bigots; and impeaches the wisdom of Christ him-self in sending them forth into the world?

That avowed infidels should admit these conclusions, is not at all wonderful: but that an opinion so derogatory to the honour of Christ, and even, if carried to its consequences, subversive of christianity, should obtain favour among the friends of our holy religion, and influence their practice, can be ascribed to nothing but the extreme deceitfulness of the human heart; and the deep subtlety of Satan, who thus endeavours to retain his destructive sway, without disturbance from the disciples of him, who came to destroy his works and subvert his kingdom.

Before we proceed to examine the judgment of the apostle, I would make a few remarks on the charge of *uncharitableness*, and even *malevolence*, which is brought against those, who in this respect undoubted-

ly "speak according to the oracles of God." Our "God." Our opinions, concerning the eternal condition of our fellow men, will not alter that condition, whether we groundlessly presume that they are safe, or needlessly tremble lest they should perish everlastingly: but our judgment in many cases, will influence our conduct; and groundless confidence may induce a ruinous inactivity, while needless fears can only prompt us to self-denying exertions, which in that case might have been spared. Nor do our opinions necessarily accord to our desires and wishes, nay they are very commonly at direct variance with them. Jeremiah was most deeply convinced that the terrible vengeance of God was about to be poured out on his country; and he was accused as an enemy to his nation, and a traitor to his prince, because he faithfully shewed them their danger: yet he could appeal to the Searcher of hearts, that he "had not desired the woeful day;" "he wept in secret places for their pride;" he continued to pray for them after repeated interdictions from God; he seemed to dread nothing more than to see his character as a true prophet completely proved; and after all his sufferings from his ungrateful people, he preferred a lot among the impoverished remains of them, to the proffered favour of Babylon's victorious monarch.

The time would fail to insist on the judgment and conduct of St. Paul respecting the unbelieving Jews, whose doom he constantly predicted, yet declared that "he could wish himself accursed from Christ," (or, "after the manner of Christ,) to prevent it!—But the example of our Lord himself, weeping over the very

city, the awful destruction of which he foretold and denounced, might, one would have supposed, have forever silenced christians from charging the opinions of their brethren, respecting the lost condition either of their neighbours, or the heathen, on the want of charity; and ascribing the opposite sentiment to an excess of *benevolence* and *candour!* Yet we risk nothing in avowing, that, not only do almost all exertions to promote the gospel originate with such as hold the *uncharitable* sentiment, and owe their principal support to them; but that they do far more than their proportion, according to their ability, in relieving the temporal distresses of mankind!

Whatever we may hope or fear, the heathen either are "perishing for lack of knowledge," or they are not: and it is very strange, that *love* should in this instance lead men to that very conduct, which, if adopted by a parent towards a child, when supposed to be in urgent danger, would be ascribed to brutal selfishness, and want of natural affection! And that *malevolence* should dictate those anxious fears, and expensive self-denying exertions, which in any case, immediately affecting the health or temporal safety of others, would be looked upon as indubitable proofs of strong affection and tender solicitude!

These hints premised, I proceed to shew—

I. The judgment of the apostle concerning the state of the heathen, as it may be gathered from the text; with illustrations of the subject, and remarks upon it.

II. To consider the duties incumbent on us in this respect, and to enquire how far we have criminally neglected them.

III. To suggest some hints, respecting the performance of these duties. And

IV. To conclude with a few particulars respecting this Society.

I. Then, I would shew the judgment of the apostle concerning the state of the heathen, as it may be gathered from the text; with illustrations of the subject, and remarks upon it.

In the preceding part of the chapter, the apostle shews the character and condition of unconverted sinners in general. "You hath he quickened, who were "dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye "walked, according to the course of this world, ac- "cording to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit "that now worketh in the children of disobedience. "Among whom also we all had our conversation in "times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the de- "sires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature "the children of wrath, even as others." In this passage he evidently includes both Jews and Gentiles, and the whole body of the Christian church, as considered in themselves, before that "God, who is rich in mer- "cy, for his great love wherewith he loved them, even "when dead in sin, had "quickened them together "with Christ." But he afterwards thus addresses, in particular, the converts made from among the heathen "Wherefore remember, that ye, being in time passed "Gentiles in the flesh, who are called the uncircum- "cision, by that which is called the circumcision in "the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were "without Christ, being aliens from the common- "wealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants "of promise, having no hope and without God in the

" world." They had been, in their external situation, under vastly greater disadvantages, and at a much farther distance from God and salvation, than the Jews. " But now in Christ Jesus, ye who were sometime " far off are made nigh by the blood of Jesus." And it is evident, that a similar difference subsists at this day, between professed Christians, and those who have not the external means of grace and salvation.

The Messiah had been promised from the very first entrance of sin, as " the Seed of the woman, who " should bruise the serpent's head:" but this promise, at least in its spiritual meaning, was little known, except among the remnant that adhered to the worship of the true God; and in a short time after the deluge, idolatry became almost universal. To check in some degree its destructive progress, God was pleased to call Abraham, and to enter into covenant with him and his posterity by Isaac and Jacob; especially in respect of the promised Saviour, in whom all nations were at length to be blessed: but the rest of the human race, with but few exceptions, seem very soon to have lost, almost entirely, even that traditional recollection of the promise concerning him, which they might have derived from Adam and Noah: for that confused expectation of a Messiah, which prevailed near the time of his coming, evidently appears to have been gathered from the Jewish Scriptures, that had been translated into the Greek language some time before, and widely disseminated in the adjacent countries; which, by the way, was evidently designed in Providence to facilitate the propagation of the Gospel, and proved no inconsiderable advantage to the

apostles and evangelists.—The ceremonial law of Moses was a shadow of good things to come, and its ordinances were means of grace by which many believed and were saved. The oracles of God, entrusted to Israel, and all the prophets sent among them, shewed the coming of Christ, his sufferings and the glory that should follow. The Lord ratified his covenants with them; the Sinai-covenant with the people in general; the Abrahamick covenant, as relating to the blessings of salvation, with all believers; the covenant of the priesthood with Aaron's family; and that of the kingdom with David and his family, to be fulfilled at length in that of the Messiah as descended from him.

But all this time the Gentiles were "aliens from "the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the "covenants of promise." Especially they were *without Christ*, or in all respects *separated* from him. No explicit promises or revelation concerning him had ever reached their ears; and as faith must rest on divine revelation, they had no ground for believing in him. They had no ordinances administered among them, as prefiguring the salvation, and the way of the sinner's access to God, through his atoning blood and intercession; or representing the sanctification of the heart by his Holy Spirit. No prophets were sent to instruct them: no covenant was made with them: and in general, they knew nothing, and had little opportunity of learning any thing, concerning 'the inestimable 'benefit of redemption by Christ;' they were favoured with no 'means of grace,' and were therefore without 'the hope of glory.'—And does not every one

perceive, that all these particulars are equally true, concerning the nations which still remain strangers to christianity?

According to the apostle, the Gentiles "had *no* "*hope*." When the woman of Samaria enquired of our Lord, whether the Jews or the Samaritans worshipped God aright, he answered, "Ye worship ye "know not what, we know what we worship; for *sal*- "*vation* is of the Jews." If then, by the express testimony of Christ himself, the Samaritans, who were not gross idolaters, "knew not what they worship- "ped," because they did not adhere to those ritual appointments, which represented JEHOVAH as a just God and a Saviour, through the promised Messiah and his redemption; it must follow that the Gentiles, being *without Christ*, have likewise *no hope*. With whatever speculations some few philosophical men amused themselves and others, concerning the Deity and the immortality of the soul; or whatever expectations they formed of happiness after death; it is evident that they had nothing worthy to be called *hope*. In general they had no fixed belief of that future state, about which they speculated; they knew scarcely any thing concerning the happiness or misery which there awaits every human being; or what preparation of heart was requisite, even, to the *enjoyment* of happiness, could they have been admitted into the regions of the blessed. Uncertainty rested on all their reasonings, which had no abiding good effect on their practice. The love of this present world was the main spring of all their actions; their confidence of the divine favour was the result of ignorance and proud self-

flattery; and so they lived and died, not indeed without *presumption*, but without any *well-grounded hope* of future happiness. For every *warranted* hope of this kind must be derived from divine revelation. "Life "and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel:" which fully assures us of a future and eternal state of retributions; and shews us the only way of escaping everlasting punishment and obtaining everlasting felicity. The plan of salvation, through the redemption of the Son of God, and sanctification by the Holy Spirit, is clearly revealed. The *object* of hope, and the *ground* of hope, are set before us in the gospel; the means of grace are appointed; and all who believe, and wait on the Lord in the honest use of these means, are assuredly made partakers of the blessing. So that the poorest and most illiterate true believer can give a vastly clearer and more intelligent account, and *solid reason* of his hope of happiness in a future world; than the whole company of ancient Pagan philosophers, and modern infidels together, ever did or ever can give: while his character proves that it is *hope* and not *presumption;* "for every man that has this hope in "him, purifieth himself, even as he" (his Lord and Saviour) "is pure."

In the judgment of the apostles, the Gentiles were also "*without God* in the world," or *atheists*, for so the word signifies. Not that they were in general *avowed* atheists; for indeed very few of them were. Yet the expression must denote more, than that they lived as if there had been no God: for this might with equal truth have been said of numbers among the Jews; and it now may be asserted of vast multitudes

who are called christians. The meaning evidently is, that the idols which the heathen adored, were in all respects unworthy to be called God; as the apostle reasons in other places. "When ye knew not God, ye "did service to them which by nature are no gods."* "An idol is nothing in the world, and there is no "other God but one: for though there be, that are "called gods, whether in heaven or in earth; (as there "be gods many and lords many;) but to us there is "but one God, the Father, of whom are all things "and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by "whom are all things and we by him."†—In one view the idols of the Gentiles were nothing but "gold, "silver, and stone, graven by art and man's device;" in another, they were demons, or the departed spirits of men, commonly very bad men; and in another, their idolatry was in fact the worship of Satan and his angels, For "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice "they sacrifice to devils and not to God, and I would "not that ye should have fellowship with devils." Hence it is that Satan is called the god, as well as the prince, of this world; being the grand, though concealed, object of religious worship to mankind in general, as well as their lord and tyrant; "For we know (says the apostle) that the whole world lieth in wick-"edness," or rather *in the wicked one;* and "the old "serpent, called the devil and Satan," (*Abaddon*, *Apollyon*, the *destroyer*,) "has deceived the whole "world."

---

* Gal. iv. 8. † 1 Cor. viii. 4—6.

Thus the religion of the Gentiles, so far from honouring God, was in his sight the most detestable of all their abominations: and it should be carefully observed, that the word *abomination* is used in Scripture for *idolatry*, more frequently than for any other crime, or indeed all other crimes taken together; and therefore the apostle declared idolaters to be without *excuse*, however it be at present fashionable to *excuse* them. The two first commandments in the law are expressly made against the two grand species of idolatry.—"Jealousy is the rage of a man:" yet this vehement indignation and deep resentment is ascribed to God, respecting idolatry, when he calls himself repeatedly a *jealous* God. He will not give his glory to another; and the most indignant severity of language is used against all idolatry and idolaters: not to authorize us to persecute or hate them; but to caution us against all approaches to so provoking a crime; and to excite our compassion towards the poor Gentiles, and to animate our exertions, to recover them from the horrid and deplorable worship and service of the devil, in which they are at present sunk.

All the Gentiles without exception were and are idolaters, and consequently "without God in the world;" for the few instances mentioned in Scripture of pious persons without the church of Israel, (such as Job and some others,) were not Gentiles in this sense of the word, though they lived among them. Even the philosophers, whose writings are now extolled, with an evident intention of depreciating the oracles of God; while they speculated about a supreme Being, conformed, and taught others to conform to the

prevailing gross idolatry; (perhaps with the solitary exception of Socrates, and it is doubtful whether he can be excepted.) And most of them reasoned themselves into some refined species of atheism or other, so that they too were atheists in the world; for "Professing "themselves wise they became fools."

The characters of the imaginary Pagan deities drawn by selfish and licentious poets, to please sanguinary tyrants, ambitious conquerors, luxurious nobles, or a profligate multitude, were completely suited to sanction, or even consecrate, the most detestable vices, and to render the worshippers vile in proportion as they became zealous. The ordinances, in which they served these filthy demons, combined every thing pompous, jovial, and sensual, and often the most unnatural barbarities. Their temples were the recesses of debauchery, and their priests and priestesses, in general, the most shameless wretches that ever disgraced human nature. So that, besides the direct criminality of giving the glory of God to creatures, which inevitably implies the basest ingratitude, rebellion, and contempt; all kinds of wickedness were *cultivated*, with great success, by such a religion. Savage cruelty, fraud and imposture, gross debauchery, and every species of immorality, flourished, as in a fertile well cultured soil, in proportion as their religion was earnestly attended on. And this explains the apostle's reasoning in the first chapter of Romans, in which he considers the most detestable vices as, through the just judgment of God, springing from the idolatry of the Gentiles, as from their genuine source. Whether we consult the Scriptures, or the writings of ancient idolaters, we

shall form the same judgment of the character of the Gentiles: provided we estimate it by the perfect standard of the divine law; and not by the erroneous principles and defective rules, which sinners have invented for themselves; according to which they "call evil "good, and good evil; they put darkness for light, "and light for darkness; sweet for bitter, and bitter "for sweet."

The sacred writers speak of the Gentiles, as having "the understanding darkened, being alienated from "the life of God, through the ignorance that is in "them, because of the *hardness* of their hearts; who, "being past feeling, have given themselves over unto "lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greedi-"ness."—"For it is a shame even to speak of those "things which are done of them in secret." "For "the time past," says St. Peter, "of our lives may "suffice to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, "when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of "wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable ido-"latries; wherein they think it strange that ye run not "with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil "of you."

And every mention of the character, born by Gentile converts in their heathen state, implies an excess of immorality as well as impiety. "Be not deceived; "neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor "effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with man-"kind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor "revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom "of God: and such were some of you."—"Mortify "therefore your members which are upon the earth;

" fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil " concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; " for which things sake the wrath of God cometh on " the children of disobedience; in the which *ye also* " *walked some time*, when ye lived in them." Surely such persons were in themselves " vessels of wrath " fitted for destruction." In short, what passage can be cited, from either the Old or New Testament, which, fairly interpreted, gives us any better opinion of the heathen world at large, or of any nation in it, whether civilized or barbarous?

I need not quote at large the well known dreadful representation, which the apostle Paul has drawn of idolaters in general, in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans: but I will venture to say, that one altogether as horrid might be formed from the most admired writers of the Greeks and Romans, and almost in their very words. Sometimes indeed a satyrist inveighs against the atrocious vices of his neighbours, with an indignant severity: but far more commonly the most nefarious practices are spoken of with little commotion or reprehension, and often in a playful strain of jocularity. To write of the most heinous crimes imaginable, with calm indifference, as *things of course*, is an awful proof how low the standard of virtue was fixed, and how deplorably men's principles and consciences were depraved. The manner in which, not merely fornication and adultery, but even unnatural practices, are spoken of, is more emphatically impressive on the serious mind, that " all flesh had cor- " rupted his way upon the earth," than the most vehement exclamations, or bitter invectives, could be:

for these would shew that some sense of right and wrong remained in men's consciences; but the other evinces that they were past feeling. The astonishing cruelty of many thousands butchered every year in the gladiatorial shews, to amuse Roman senators and ladies; the savage and sanguinary measures generally adopted in war, which was always honourable if successful; the custom of sometimes massacreing the captives, and generally selling them for slaves, with scarcely a remonstrance from moralists and philosophers; the extreme barbarity with which slaves were treated, and sometimes murdered by great numbers at once, lest they should prove too powerful for their oppressors; the very common practice of exposing infants;* and all the system of rapine, fraud, and oppression, by which the Romans supported the most astonishing prodigality and sensuality, are too notorious to be denied, and

---

* Terence, not one of the most immoral of the Roman poets, introduces a young gentleman, who had a mistress supposed to be a slave, by whom he had a son. This son he meant to bring up; and on that account he is represented as a *prodigy*, not of natural affection or compassion, but of madness and folly! Had he murdered the babe, all had been very well.

——— Gravida e Pamphilo est:
Audireque eorum, est operæ pretium, audaciam,
Nam inceptio est amentium, haud amantium,
Quicquid peperisset, decreverunt toliere.

ANDR. act. i. sc. 3.

To be sure it is a slave, into whose mouth this sentence is put, but a poet, intimately acquainted with the chief nobility in Rome, would not have introduced any one speaking in this style, if the conduct censured had not been contrary to the established maxims and practice in that renowned city.

too detestable to be excused. Nor does it appear, that the lower orders were at all better, except as they had it not in their power to gratify their lusts to so great an excess. In short, the history of the several Gentile nations as handed down to us by pagan writers, when compared with the divine law, and divested of the false colourings with which it is commonly exhibited, is the most striking comment imaginable on the scriptural doctrine of human depravity, and of Satan's tyranny over our fallen race. Can we then wonder that the apostle should say of them "without Christ,— "without hope, and without God in the world?" —"Darkness covered the earth," and "the dark "places of the earth were the habitations of cruelty" and of every abomination; till Christ sent his ministers "to open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness "to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, "that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and an "inheritance among them that are sanctified, by faith "in him."

It has indeed become customary to admire the virtues of the ancient heathens: but no impartial man can deny, that the eulogiums passed on them contradict, not only Scripture, but the testimony of pagan writers; for very few indeed can be mentioned, even among their philosophers, who would in this country be deemed so much as moral characters, when the whole recorded concerning them was fairly investigated. In general their virtues, defectively as they delineate them, were only found in their declamations and writings, and were scarcely at all visible in their lives.

In like manner several modern travellers (who, by

the help of their coadjutors the infidels, have often seemed to labour at proving that christianity is useless or needless,) launch out in commendation of the virtuous Hindoos, Chinese, or inhabitants of the South-sea islands: yet, it is undeniable, that the more these have been known, the fuller has been the proof, that they are exceedingly prone to vices of every kind; as well as given up to idolatry, or sunk in total ignorance concerning God and religion. So that it would not be very difficult to shew, *from respectable testimony*, that with variations arising from external circumstances, the character, drawn by the apostles of the ancient heathen, is realized, as to all its grand outlines, in that of modern pagans. And even the Mahometans are not far, if at all, behind them: for though they do not present to our view altars reeking with human sacrifices, (vast numbers of which are still offered in divers parts of the world,) or with the grosser abominations of idolatry: yet the excessive licentiousness indulged by them, even on the principles of their detestable religion, in imitation of their debauched prophet, and in expectation of more refined sensuality in their promised paradise, are scarcely less shocking to the serious mind; especially as connected with the principle, that this paradise is secured to those who die in battle, attempting, by blood and slaughter, to propagate these licentious tenets!

On what ground then, can a christian conclude, that men, thus universally sunk in idolatry or the basest superstition, and in all kinds of vice and immorality, till they have almost obliterated the very sense of right and wrong, can be entitled to the reward of

everlasting happiness, or meet for the enjoyment of its holy delights, without "repentance towards God and "faith in our Lord Jesus Christ?" Certainly neither the promises of a Saviour; nor the covenant made with him, as a Mediator, nor his instructions to his apostles, nor their manner of executing their commission, nor their language concerning the Gentiles, give the smallest countenance to such a sentiment: but they always spake and acted, as if conversion to God by Jesus Christ was absolutely necessary, in order that any of the human race should be saved. And as "it is "appointed to men once to die, but after death the "judgment," at which solemn season all that do not go into eternal life, must go away into everlasting punishment; and "they who sin without law will perish "without law;" we can allow nothing further than that it will be far more tolerable in the day of judgment for ignorant heathens, than for ungodly professors of christianity. The Scripture is decisive on the subject, however its determination may now be opposed, under the pretence of candour and charity.

But it may be objected, that christians in general are as wicked as the Gentiles, or not much better: and we should answer this objection with tears and heartfelt grief! "Woe be to the world because of offences! It "must needs be that offences come, but woe be to that "man by whom they come." It is however unreasonable to suppose that christianity will change those, who neither believe its doctrines, nor attend on its ordinances, nor obey its precepts; even as unreasonable as to expect, that a medicine should cure those who refuse to take it. And it is still more absurd to charge the blame on christianity, of all those abominations,

which Antichrist has perpetrated, in express contradiction to the commands of Christ, but according to what was clearly foretold by his apostles as a vile perversion of his holy religion: even as absurd, as to find fault with an excellent medicine, because a vile murderer had substituted a fatal poison in its stead!

Yet after all, christianity has done immense good to society, even among those who are not true christians. Christianity, by subverting the system of gross idolatry, has terminated a variety of cruel and inhuman practices, and detestable debaucheries, which it sanctioned and protected. Far juster notions, not only of God and religion, but also concerning what is laudible or the contrary in the actions of men, have grown almost imperceptibly from the influence of christianity. It has fixed a vastly higher standard of morals, not only in the books of the learned, but in the general sentiments of mankind. It has driven into secret recesses such crimes, as before stalked abroad without shame. It has mitigated the horrors even of war; and removed savage cruelty, at least, from publick diversions. It has given a consequence to the lower ranks in society, and to the female sex, to which they before were strangers. It has endowed hospitals, and multiplied publick charities; and given men in general a far deeper sense of their obligation to relieve distress, than they had before, or now have in heathen countries: and if it still fail of abolishing the slave-trade, it has entered such a protest against the abominable traffick, as all the annals of paganism cannot equal; and in many other ways it has vastly meliorated the state of the world.

But where its truths are indeed believed, and its precepts obeyed, far more important and beneficial effects follow. Even in this land, while we must mourn over prevailing abominations, we cannot but be confident that there are tens of thousands, who truly repent of all their sins, and "do works meet "for repentance," who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and are "constrained by love to live no longer "to themselves, but to him who died for them, and "rose again;" who, after his example, and in obedience to his command, walk in love, by love serve one another, and so love even their enemies, as to persevere in attempting "to overcome evil with good;" in short, who are "taught by the grace of God, which "bringeth salvation, to deny ungodliness and worldly "lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in "this present world; looking for that blessed hope, "and the glorious appearance of the great God, and "of our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for "us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify us "unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good "works."—These are accepted in Christ, and made meet for the inheritance of heaven: and they are bright examples, shining as lights in the world, who, by their influence, endeavours, converse, and prayers, check the progress of vice and impiety, and communicate, as "the salt of the earth," the savour of truth and holiness around them.

But where do we read, in the account of nations strangers to christianity, ancient or modern, of characters unequivocally answering to this remnant found in christian countries! And what would be the con-

sequence, if this genuine christianity should universally prevail in any nation; and all men should live as this remnant does, who are yet consciously very far from having attained even that measure of holiness to which divine grace has raised numbers of their fellow sinners? and what would be the effect of the gospel being thus believed and obeyed all over the earth, but universal piety, humility, justice, temperance, peace, and love? Wars, oppressions, frauds, slavery, licentiousness, and every species of violence and immorality, must cease of course: if the change were effected suddenly, it would still the madness of this turbulent world as entirely, as the Saviour's powerful words, "Peace, be still," silenced the stormy winds, and calmed the tempestuous billows: and whenever or by whatever means it shall take place, a state of felicity on earth, not much unlike that of heaven, will be the necessary consequence. For this we are taught by our Lord to pray in *the first place*, "Hallowed be "thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in "earth, as it is in heaven:" and surely, if we would not have our prayers condemned as hypocrisy, we should endeavour to promote this kingdom of our God and Saviour, by all the means in our power.

Contrast then, my christian brethren, the state of the world, as it has been hitherto, especially in heathen countries, with what it would be did our holy religion every where prevail; and while your hearts glow with gratitude for the peculiar blessings which you enjoy, and with fervent desires that the same may be communicated to all nations, and while these desires are formed into earnest ejaculatory prayers for

the blessed change; you will be prepared for the sequel of the subject.

II. Then, let us consider the duties in this respect incumbent on us, and enquire how far we have criminally neglected them:

And here it is necessary to be cautious, that we do not, by an indiscriminate statement, both fail of producing conviction; give occasion to rash and unwarrantable attempts; and furnish opponents with plausible objections, as if we wanted to induce men, by a disproportionate and romantick zeal in one particular, to disregard all other duties in pursuing the favourite object.

When our Lord said to his apostles, "Go ye and "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the "Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I "have commanded you; and lo, I am with you al-"ways, even unto the end of the world;" "Go ye "into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every "creature;" and "that repentance and remission of "sins should be preached in my name to all nations:" he certainly did not mean, that the apostles and primitive evangelists *alone* should be employed in this service; for they could only execute their commission for a very few years, and in comparatively a small part of the globe. No doubt therefore he intended, that the churches which they established, and the ministers who should afterwards be raised up, from age to age, should not merely stand on the defensive, and indolently keep the ground which had been gained; but should carry on an offensive war against the king-

dom of darkness with persevering constancy. And so long as any part of any nation remains unconverted to christianity, the church militant ought, no doubt, to persist in this holy warfare, without indulging sloth, or fearing man, or regarding any secular interest, compared with the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom, "of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The work is the Lord's, but he carries it on by means and instruments: and it must therefore be our duty to use such means, and to seek for such instruments, as he employs and blesses; in order that, according to the predictions and promises of Scripture, "Christ may "be a Light to the Gentiles and the Salvation of the "LORD to the ends of the earth."

The progress made in this respect during the first century was so great, that had the same holy ardour animated succeeding christians, every part of the world would long since have been evangelized. But alas, that disinterested, courageous, and patient zeal, and that deep compassion for perishing sinners, which actuated the apostles and primitive preachers of the gospel, gradually declined, till it almost expired; and then its feeble exertions were made to promote a corrupted gospel by antichristian means. So that it may be doubted, whether, all things considered, the kingdom of the Redeemer, during the course of above 1500 years, has not been contracted rather than extended. All the professed christians, of every name, do not at this day amount to one sixth of mankind; and what sort of christians most of them are is alas well known!

Whether therefore we consider the great ends for which the Son of God came into the world; or his

commands to his disciples; or the way in which they understood them, and their example of zealous unwearied exertion, amidst hardship and persecution, and with martyrdom always before their eyes: or whether we advert to the law of love, as illustrated by his conduct, "who came into the world to save sinners;" and "for the joy set before him endured the cross and "despised the shame;" it is obvious, that something should be attempted, with zeal and perseverance, to enlarge the Redeemer's kingdom by evangelizing the heathen.

But even in the primitive times, it was not the duty of every christian to become a minister; nor that of pastors in general to leave their stated charges to preach the gospel in distant lands: and therefore they were not criminal in declining these services. Slaves, poor persons, and others, would have very little acquaintance with the state of distant countries; very little ability to amend what they saw amiss nearer home; and no direct influence beyond their own contracted circle.

Some individuals however were so evidently called forth, qualified, and marked by their brethren, and the pastors of the church, for these services, that if they declined or forsook them, they were highly criminal: such at first was Mark, when he went not with Paul and Barnabas to the work, evidently because he shunned danger and hardship; and Demas who forsook the apostle, "having loved this present world." It was also incumbent on the stated pastors of the church to excite in the minds of christians a zeal for the conversion of the nations; and by their example, prayers, and ministrations, to stir up a desire in proper persons to engage

in the arduous but honourable service. They who were not employed in the ministry, or endowed with the needful qualifications, were doubtless bound to contribute, according to their ability, to the support of such as "went forth in the name of Christ, taking no-"thing of the Gentiles;" in order that they might be "fellow-helpers to the truth." Others would be required cheerfully to part with their dear relatives, that they might not prevent their engaging in the perilous work: nay, loving Christ more than any relation, it would be their duty to encourage them, if competent judges deemed them called to undertake it. In a variety of ways the common cause might be promoted, by the examples, influence, and conversation of christians in general; as every thing, that tends to communicate and perpetuate a spirit of genuine zeal and love within the church, must also tend to remove obstructions to its enlargement. And especially all might unite in constant prayers to "the Lord of the harvest, "to send forth labourers into his harvest," and to protect, comfort, guide, and bless all those who were engaged in preaching the Gospel to the nations: while the degree of every man's obligation, and his criminality in not fulfilling it, bore a proportion to the talents entrusted to his stewardship.

The case is still the same. It behoves every one of us to enquire what we can do in this respect, *consistently with other duties?* What advantages we possess, for promoting so good a cause? What we might attempt, did not selfishness, love of the world, and fear of hardship and suffering, induce a reluctancy; or unbelief lead us to conclude, that no good can be

done? How we may, by patronage, liberality, or labour, second such well concerted plans as others have formed, but have not the means of executing? Or how concur in forming plans, which others, who have more influence, may adopt and carry into execution? Or how we may suggest hints to those who are employed, which may conduce to their success?

The talents and circumstances of men are immensely various: and we should not merely aim to induce the concurrence of multitudes; but that each individual should be employed, according to his peculiar qualifications, or the situation in which he is placed. In times of war, it would not conduce to success, for all to become soldiers: for, statesmen, and senators, and very many descriptions of men in subordinate stations, are as necessary as even the soldiers themselves.

Thus faithful pastors in their several congregations; prudent and active men who form and conduct plans for evangelizing the heathen; men in business, who devote a portion of their honest gain to support the expences; they who study the languages of the nations, and use other means of preparing missionaries for their work, or facilitating their progress; and they that, having influence or reputation; patronize and protect their designs against the opposition of worldly men; are all serving the common cause: nor would it be advisable to remove them from their several stations, even to employ them as missionaries. In various ways, especially by adorning the gospel, and promoting the purity and peace of the church, and by constant prayers, vast multitudes may concur, who have neither that vigour of constitution, nor that ardour and

strength of mind, nor those rare and peculiar endowments, which are requisite to constitute such a missionary, as may hope for permanent success.

But should any one be led to think that he ought to engage in this service; or should the eyes of his pastor, or pious friends, be turned on him, as a suitable person; it would be his duty, earnestly to pray that God would enable him to divest himself of all prejudice, arising from worldly hopes and fears; to examine impartially his own motives and spirit; to consult competent judges; to deliberate on their advice, as in the sight of God; to view the subject steadily and on every side; and thus to determine how he ought to act, and then to follow his conviction, leaving all consequences in the hands of the Lord.

In short, if a man attempts what, all things considered, he deems incumbent on him; and endeavours by proper means to learn more fully "what the will "of the Lord is;" he is not in this respect chargeable with guilt: but if his conscience testifies, that sloth, self-indulgence, and a disregard to the glory of God and the salvation of his fellow creatures, compared with worldly objects, induce him to neglect what he might do, and what he ought to do, he is doubtless criminal: and it may seriously be apprehended, that all christians, during many ages, have been chargeable with great neglect in this particular: and it especially forms no inconsiderable part of our national guilt; in that, professing the christian religion, we have carried our merchandize and our vices, into all the regions of the earth; and have almost entirely failed of improving our peculiar advantages, for communicating to the

Gentiles the blessings of our holy religion. A remnant, I trust, has sighed and mourned on this account, as well as over the other prevailing iniquities of our land: yet a selfish torpor, a Laodicean lukewarmness, seems to have seized upon the hearts of most of us; from which, I pray God, we may at length be finally and effectually delivered; so that "our love and zeal may "abound more and more in knowledge and in all "judgment!"

III. I proceed to suggest some hints concerning the performance of our *duties* in respect of the conversion of the heathen.

But indeed, if the Gentiles are living "without "Christ, without hope, and without God in the world;" it might be supposed that they, who by providence and grace have been made to differ, whom God hath "reconciled to himself by Jesus Christ," and who now rejoice in the hope of eternal glory, would be all alive to the feelings of compassion towards their poor fellow-sinners, as well as filled with grateful zeal for the honour of their beloved Lord and Saviour; and that having experienced the blessings of his gospel themselves, they would be eager to communicate them to those who are perishing in pagan darkness. Thus the primitive christians and ministers evidently felt and acted; hence all their zealous labours, and constant self-denial, and patient sufferings. They did not coldly say, What is my bounden duty? But, What can I do? "Here I am, Lord, send me." The apostles and evangelists were ready to go any whither, and to venture and suffer any thing, provided they might have the invaluable favour granted them, of "preaching among

" the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." They were often so zealous in the cause, that it was needful for their brethren to moderate their ardour; and numbers, with St. Paul, might have said, " None " of these things move me, neither count I my life " dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course " with joy, and the ministry which I have received " of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace " of God." And indeed the christians in general, who were not called to this special service, seem to have been animated by the same holy fervency, in aiding the exertions of their brethren to the utmost of their ability.

When we think of nearly a thousand millions of our species at once inhabiting this globe; all sinners, all having immortal souls, all to stand before God in judgment, all soon to die, yet to live *for ever* in another world, either in happiness or misery; and few, (alas, how very few in comparison!) having any ground to hope for happiness in that eternal state: when we reflect that another thousand millions will in a few years have succeeded the present generation; all born in sin, and the children of wrath and disobedience, to be soon swept away into eternity, and that this is the case from age to age: and when we remember that " God has so loved the world as to give his only be- " gotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should " not perish but have everlasting life;" that in infinite mercy he has sent us the gospel, and led us to embrace it; that we possess a good hope through grace; and that the same gospel is suitable, free, and sufficient, for all throughout the world, if all heard and

believed it: surely the mind that was in Christ, love to him and his cause, a desire to imitate his example, and genuine philanthropy, will combine to excite us to use all our influence, in every way, which may tend, either directly or more remotely, to promote the great ends of Emmanuel's incarnation, and death upon the cross! Our life is short; a large proportion of it is already spent; we have lived too much and too long unto ourselves; and "there is no work, nor de-"vice, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, "whither we are going." Let us then not merely enquire what we are *bound* to do, but what we can do. And how any of our labours, efforts, or contributions, according to our several talents, may produce some effect in spreading our holy religion; and how we, feeble and insignificant individuals, by combining our influence, and exciting others to join us, may extend its blessings to the remotest nations, and to those who shall exist in future ages. Surely this is the grand end for which we ought to value life, after we "have "known the grace of God in truth;" and all that respects our temporal interests, should be entirely subordinated to the desire of glorifying God, and doing good to mankind, above all in their eternal concerns!

If we would conduct undertakings of this kind in that manner which may eventually be most useful; we should endeavour to acquire enlarged views of the subject. A soul in China, or Africa, is of as much value, as one in our own families or congregations, and its salvation is as important: and in like manner a soul that shall exist in the next century, or ages after

we are dead, will be of as much value, as the soul of any man now living. We should therefore make up our minds to lay ourselves out with persevering diligence, amidst delays and discouragements, as well as in the face of dangers and difficulties. We may never see or hear of the fruit of our exertions; but it may perhaps hereafter be said concerning them, to those who shall succeed us, "Other men laboured, and ye "are entered into their labours." The sacred writers were as really instruments in our salvation, seventeen hundred years at least after their death: as "the mi- "nisters by whom we believed;" and so were they, who first brought the inestimable treasure of the holy Scriptures into our island; and they too who translated them into our language.

The persons, who form good roads through regions before impassable, as much assist future travellers, as they who supply them with convenient vehicles. And, endeavours to acquire an acquaintance with the languages of the heathen nations; to translate the whole or any part of the Scriptures into those languages; to circulate them in the proper places; to teach the natives to read them; and in any way to furnish means of faith and grace where there are none, are preparing the road for missionaries; and may eventually as much subserve the common cause, as actually supporting missions: though not in a manner so congenial to our feelings, or so likely to gratify us with the tidings of success.

The man, who has enlarged views of agricultural improvement, not only makes inclosures, plants, vineyards, or sows corn, in order to obtain a speedy in-

crease; but he plants acorns, and raises timber trees, for the use of future generations; being satisfied with the reflection, that others will in due time be profited by his labours. In this part of his plan, which requires most patience and disinterestedness, he may be censured by the inconsiderate, as if he effected nothing: but in the event he will be proved, to have wisely consulted the permanent good of his family and of the publick. Let it not then be thought that nothing is done, while the ground is preparing, or seed is provided, or it is cast into the earth, but does not appear. Feeble beginnings may at length produce great effects: the most successful efforts, in almost every thing, have been slighted at first; and they who planned or set them on foot have seldom lived to witness their success. Let none then "despise the day "of small things:" let none undervalue any of the different methods by which the same grand object may be pursued; for we may say to christians at large in this respect, "These things ought ye to have done, "and not to have left the other undone."

In attempting to convert the heathen, we should also be careful not to forget for a moment our own principles, concerning the character of fallen man, and the usurped dominion of Satan: which alone render their conversion indispensably necessary. The human heart, both among the civilized and the savage nations, is "carnal, and enmity to God." Men may be friendly when you trade with them, and carry them such things as they highly value: but if an attempt be made, in good earnest, to turn them from their idolatry, superstition, and wickedness, to the spiritual

worship and service of God our Saviour; if their rivetted prejudices and criminal practices be fairly, though meekly, opposed; if their fears be excited, and guilt charged home on their consciences; if repentance, and works meet for repentance be insisted on; if the strict precepts and awful sanction of the divine law, and the offensive doctrines of the gospel be explained to them; if in short, christianity be thoroughly preached, as the apostles preached it, many of them will be exasperated. However they may endure gradual introductory instructions, of which they do not clearly perceive the tendency; when they fully understand what is meant, they will consider the preacher, as aiming "to turn the world upside down," as exceedingly troubling the city or country, and as teaching customs which they must not observe.

Satan also, who "works in the children of disobe-
"dience," will use all his influence, both as a deceiving serpent and as a roaring lion, to support his tottering kingdom, which is directly attacked by every effort to evangelize the heathen: nor can any prudence, meekness, or love, which consists with faithfulness, prevent the effects of this combined opposition. Dangers and difficulties likewise of various kinds are inseparable from the attempt, nor have modern missionaries the advantages enjoyed by the apostles and primitive preachers of the gospel. The invention of printing, indeed, has put a very powerful engine into our hands, of disseminating divine truth, which they had not; and of which it becomes us to make as much use, if possible, as wicked men do in propagating impiety and iniquity. But our missiona-

ries must, by long previous study, obtain the imperfect knowledge of the languages spoken by the heathen; whilst the apostles were at once endued with this needful qualification from on high. *They* called men's attention to them and their message, by multiplied and surprising miracles of love; but *our's* must gradually gain confidence "by patient continuance in "well doing." In short, obstructions, insurmountable by human power, on every side impede our progress: and it is proper we should be aware of it, and fairly warn all concerned to count the cost. But let us not be discouraged. If we use no carnal weapons, but such only as the Lord himself appoints, he will at length render them effectual. "Who art thou, O "great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt be-"come a plain."—"Not by might, nor by power, "but my Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts."

In the depth of a severe winter, the impediments to cultivation from snow and frost, are insuperable by all the power of man: but when the almighty Ruler of the seasons sends the warm south wind, with the beams of the vernal sun, the ice and snow dissolve, the earth softens, vegetation proceeds rapidly, and the husbandman finds the obstructions effectually removed. And thus it is, and thus it will be, whenever or wherever "the Spirit of God is poured from on "high." We ought not then to be discouraged by difficulties, or shrink from steadily contemplating them: but we should look well to our motives and to our means; and above all be careful to place our whole confidence in the Lord, knowing that the gospel, when faithfully preached, has always been made "the

" power of God unto salvation;" and if we have true faith, we may say to the mountain, " Be thou remov- " ed, and be thou cast into the sea," and nothing will be impossible to us. As, however, some regions oppose stronger barriers to our progress than others do; and as we cannot make our efforts in every part of that immense field which lies before us: we may very properly enquire, where the state of civilization and learning, or the nature of the existing governments, with various other circumstances, give the most reasonable prospect of success; and where a central situation affords the fairest hope that the Gospel, if successful, would thence be more widely diffused. While therefore we seek heavenly wisdom, by searching the word of God, and by constant prayer to him for it: we should endeavour to avail ourselves of all those sources of information, by which we may learn the actual situation of different countries in every part of the globe.

And here it may be observed, that it is of vast importance, that the several Societies, formed for this great purpose, should consider one another as coadjutors, and not as competitors, and cultivate an amicable intercourse. In this case many societies will probably be found preferable to one, though proportionably larger. One may embrace this special object, and another that; one may find the readiest access to this country, and the other to that country: external circumstances may give one an advantage for a particular kind of service, from which the other may be precluded: each may, as it were, bring into circulation the treasure of wisdom and piety, as well as influence,

which is found in its particular circle: and they may all profit by the counsels, plans, observation, success, or failures, of every one; and help one another in various ways, when that assistance becomes especially seasonable. Thus more methods may be tried, more talents brought into exercise, more information and wisdom acquired, and more exertion made by several societies, amicably striving together for the faith of the Gospel, than by one. Thus a number of merchants, acting separately, yet in a manner friendly to each other, extend commerce much more advantageously, than a large monopoly. And diverse kinds of soldiers form a better army; than if all were exactly of the same description, armed in the same manner, and formed but one vast phalanx: provided they have no other contest, but a zealous competition who shall best serve the common cause.

The world, my brethren, is wide enough; and there is little danger of our interfering with each other, except we intend it. If then, we endeavour to animate one another to exertion; to encourage one another's zeal and patience when they decline; to impart reciprocally information, and give mutual assistance; we may even take occasion from those things, which prevent our making one united effort, to aim at the same object with at least equal advantage.

But let it be observed, that when the Lord intends eventually to prosper any design, he seldom answers the first sanguine hopes of its zealous friends. By previous delays and disappointments, he commonly purifies our motives, renders our dependence on his power and grace more simple, and excites us to more

fervent and earnest prayer and supplication. He thus leads us to compare our measures and means with the sacred Scriptures, and to rectify what has not accorded to them. He gives us deeper views of our own unworthiness and insufficiency; and brings us to despair of success, except from his powerful interposition. Having thus formed us to a more proper disposition of mind, and the use of hollowed means exclusively, he begins to prosper the design, and to work for the glory of his own name. So that discouraging ill success, in the outset of a good design, often gives occasion to that self-examination and study, and that melioration of our motives and means, which make way for the most important subsequent success. We should therefore neither despond, as we are very apt to do, or faint, when we are thus rebuked and disappointed; nor should we object to evidently good designs, because of failures and discouragements: but we should try to profit by experience, and prosecute the object with greater simplicity and humility, and with persevering patience and unceasing prayer.

It has frequently been objected to vigorous measures for missions among the heathen, that we have multitudes of very wicked people at home, whose reformation we should attempt in preference: yet it may fairly be questioned, whether they who start the objection, are the most zealous, in using every proper means of bringing sinners to repentance and faith in Christ, in their own neighbourhood: nay, whether many of them do not, on various pretences, oppose the well meant endeavours of others for that purpose? It will perhaps be found, that the most active friends to

missions, are also the most diligent in promoting christianity at home. But it may also be observed, that none in this land are entirely destitute of all means of becoming wise unto salvation, as hundreds of millions, in other countries are known to be. Let us then do all we can for a revival of pure christianity at home, and aim also to send the gospel to the dark regions of the earth.

But some are afraid, that by sending missionaries abroad, we shall in part deprive our own country of christian instruction. Alas! there is little reason to apprehend, that any considerable number of such men, as would be likely to do effectual service at home, will engage in the work of missions: a far more zealous and courageous spirit must prevail among christians than we have hitherto witnessed, before there be any danger on that side. But if indeed this was the case, so far from diminishing our measure of scriptural instruction, it would exceedingly increase it: for nothing can be imagined so likely to stir up all ministers to zeal and activity; to turn the thoughts and inclinations of pious christians to the work of the ministry; to enlarge the acquaintance of multitudes with the holy Scriptures; and to excite a very general attention to the Gospel. I cannot doubt, but that well conducted and successful plans for evangelizing the heathen, would prove most powerful means of more fully evangelizing Britain: and on this ground, as well as on all others, the thought and desire have for years been prominent in my mind; though I long despaired of being in any measure instrumental in so blessed a service. Indeed it is no small advantage, no inconsidera-

ble success, arising from the zeal which has lately been shewn for missions; that it has excited a great attention to the revival of christianity in this land: and though every thing that man does must be found defective; yet I would indulge a hope, that both in that respect, and in the more immediate object in view, these efforts shall at length be crowned with indisputable and permanent success.

It is well known, that in times of war, the military spirit, which before lay dormant almost always rekindles and becomes general. It spreads from breast to breast, and acquires new vigour continually: insomuch, that no losses, which do not materially affect population, can properly be said to lessen the number of soldiers; for, others press forward to fill up their places, the ardour increases, and at length there is some danger lest all other employments should be deserted for a military life. These indeed are scenes deeply to be regretted, though often hitherto found unavoidable: but they may serve to illustrate our subject, and shew the tendency of our exertions.

For I apprehend, that in our spiritual warfare, likewise, the timid defensive state, in which christians have long been contented to stand, in respect of the gentile world has tended greatly to extinguish the spirit of zeal for the conversion of sinners at home; at least it has greatly languished and lain dormant: but if once the servants of God should become, generally and thoroughly engaged in scriptural efforts for the conversion of the heathen, and should declare offensive war against the kingdom of the devil; depend upon it, zeal for pure christianity in our own country

and in our own hearts, will revive in proportion. This will kindle from breast to breast; the number of true christians and faithful ministers will be multiplied; our petty differences will be mutually born with, if they do not disappear; we shall "love one another "with a pure heart fervently;" we shall pray for one another and thank God for each other; we shall be like valiant fellow-soldiers in the same army, cordially and effectionately engaged in the same common cause, and against the same common enemy.

As therefore, the revival of pure christianity would exceedingly promote the cause of missions; so, wise and holy zeal for missions would reciprocally promote the revival of pure christianity.

Having now gone through my subject, perhaps rather too largely; (but my heart is earnestly engaged by the great object, which must plead my excuse,) it may be expected that I should give some account of this newly instituted society: but here I shall be very brief and general.

We would consider ourselves as fellow-helpers with all, who attempt to propagate vital Christianity among the heathen: but we found impediments in our way, which prevented us from employing all our influence, or extending our labours so far as we desired, by concurring with any of the Societies already formed: and on this ground it was deemed more conducive to the general end, to form a separate Society, in which we hope more effectually to exert ourselves in promoting the common cause. A concurrence of circumstances, arising from external causes, from our views of the subject, and from the special line of ser-

vice in which we suppose ourselves most likely to succeed, have rendered our progress hitherto but slow: but we may confidently say, that we have not been inactive, though our proceedings have neither much attracted publick notice, nor been of a very expensive nature.

By the report of the Committee, it will appear that attempts have been made to open a correspondence with pious clergymen all over the united kingdoms; and to obtain the assistance of their counsel and prayers; and especially by their means to bring forth proper persons for missionaries, and to stir up a *missionary spirit* through the land. No doubt men may easily be found, whose ardent spirits, and predilection for uncommon adventures, dispose them for any undertaking however perilous, without having taken time, or bestowed pains, to understand the nature of it, or to count the cost: and when persons of this description receive religious impressions, they are ready enough, in some circumstances to become missionaries. But this state of mind differs widely from the considerate, humble, modest, self-denied zeal and love, of one rendered willing, by divine grace, to renounce all earthly comforts and prospects, and to labour amidst hardships and perils, with undaunted courage, unwearied patience, and steady perseverance, among pagans, in some remote and obscure part of the world.

This is the genuine missionary spirit, which, in ordinary circumstances, must be called forth, by the use of proper means, and the blessing of God upon them; and when we consider the immense field to be culti-

vated, it must appear that every thing, which tends to excite this spirit where Christianity is now known, forms a most important part of the general plan for evangelizing the heathen in future ages, in concurrence with our endeavours to attempt whatever we can, for the benefit of the present generation. And though the Society has not hitherto engaged any missionaries; they are not without hopes of being able shortly to do it: and they cannot doubt but at length God will hear their most earnest prayers, and send forth "labourers into his harvest."

It will appear, also, that various attempts are either actually making or in contemplation, for translating the Scriptures, or parts of them, or short compendiums of Christianity, into the languages of the heathen, in order to circulate them in several countries; as preparatory to missions; and in other ways to render the press subservient to the grand design.

It is also purposed to educate native Africans, and to instruct them carefully in our holy religion; in order at length to employ them as schoolmasters, among their countrymen. The avidity, with which the Africans embrace opportunities of learning the elements of science is fully ascertained; and it is hoped, that gratuitous instruction of this kind will open a way for the gospel among them; and that African schoolmasters may concur with British missionaries, and become perhaps missionaries themselves in process of time; and such missionaries, as will not so much as be incommoded by a climate, which is exceedingly trying to European constitutions.

This is not the whole of the designs already formed

by the committee; which as matured in any good measure will be made known: when it is hoped, that objections started against some particulars in their plan, will be satisfactorily obviated.—They have well weighed the extreme difficulty of the undertaking; and have endeavoured to get their minds armed against dismay and discouragement: but they would use all prudent means for preventing any waste of the sums, advanced by the public liberality, and still more, any needless risk of the health or lives of those zealous men, who engage in missions; and who are apt to disregard their own lives, in proportion as they long after the salvation of souls: as prudent and able generals are always careful not to expose their most valiant soldiers to needless danger.

But so far from giving up the design, as some have supposed, they are more and more deeply impressed with the sense of its vast importance, and more fully determined, by the help of God, to persevere in it to the uttermost. I shall only add, my brethren, that whether you can, or cannot, afford us any pecuniary assistance; we earnestly entreat you, to aid us with your daily prayers and supplications, to that God, who alone can give wisdom, inspire zeal and love, and keep us cordially united in humility and simplicity; who alone can raise us up helpers and instruments, open doors, remove mountains, and give success: as it is our decided opinion, that they who most pray for us, are the best benefactors to the institution, and take the most effectual means of rendering it successful.

A call to Prayer for the sending forth of Labourers.

A

SERMON,

Preached before

THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

AT

THE CHURCH OF ST. SAVIOUR'S, SOUTHWARK,

MAY 11, 1804.

"Is there not a Cause?" 1 *Sam.* xvii. 29.

SERMON II.

LUKE X. 2.

Therefore, said he unto them, the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

THE propagation of our most holy religion, among those who still remain strangers to its inestimable benefits, should be considered as the common cause of christians, throughout the world: and all attempts, to disseminate scriptural truth by scriptural means, should be countenanced and forwarded by every man according to his ability, and as far as it consists with his other duties and engagements. "For his name's "sake, they went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles— "We therefore ought to receive such," (or help them on their way,) "that we might be fellow-helpers to "the truth."*

* 3 John 7, 8.

Indeed, to withhold any assistance, which we can, with a clear conscience, afford to those, who are endeavouring to rescue from destruction some of the many millions of perishing sinners among the Gentiles, merely out of regard to unessential differences in forms or opinions; seems not less absurd, and in some respects more unfeeling, than to suffer the destructive progress of a conflagration, and to disregard the cries of such as are perishing in the flames; while we scrupulously enquire into the tenets of those, who attempt to raise the ladders and work the engines. With the greatest alacrity, therefore, my beloved brethren, and in full confidence that I do not at all act inconsistently with my more immediate relation to another society, formed for the same pious and benevolent purposes, I have acceded to the request of the directors, and am ready to bear my feeble testimony in behalf of the London Missionary Society; to which this peculiar distinction belongs, that it has excited an immensely more general attention to the state of the heathen and the obligations of christians respecting them, than before prevailed; and thus has occasioned the establishment of many other societies of the same nature, in Britain, on the continent, and in North America; the fruit of which will, no doubt, in due time, be made manifest, to a degree not easily to be calculated.

It has indeed been asked, Why preach for both the societies? To which I answer, for the same reason, that I would preach for both the Westminster Infirmary and St. George's Hospital, (contiguous charities, both for the same purposes;) because both are needful and useful, and are entitled to support. ' But

'this leaves us at a loss to which we should subscribe:' Then, if you can afford it, subscribe to both: if not, use your own discretion, and follow the dictates of your own judgment. I do not come to urge subscriptions, but to recommend the general cause of missions, and of this society in particular, as standing forward in that cause; and to intreat at least the assistance of your fervent prayers.

When we hear of several societies for missions, established, and holding their annual meetings, in this metropolis, we are apt to enquire, What need of so many for the same purpose? But when the immensity of the field which lies open to their exertions, is carefully considered, there will by no means appear too many. The societies may *seem*, (and probably no more than *seem*) to crowd and interfere with each other in London: but there is no fear, that their missionaries, when sent abroad, will be in one another's way, or impede each other's usefulness. Thus the ships, by which our extensive commerce is carried on, are greatly crowded together in the river; but not so on the vast seas and oceans which they severally navigate. Nay, (the case of war excepted,) the sight of a sail is generally refreshing to the seamen: when vessels, even of different nations, meet at a great distance from home, they relieve each other's wants; and often the approach of a vessel, though belonging to a rival company or merchant, gives the most heartfelt joy that can almost be conceived. Perhaps the comparison may hold still further: and as a greater number of ships of moderate size are generally preferred to a few that are inconveniently large; so, different societies, if mutually aiding each other, will be

found more useful, than any *one* which could be formed out of them all.

'It is, however, of vast importance, that the several societies should consider one another, as coadjutors, not competitors, and cultivate an amicable intercourse. In this case many may be preferable to one, though proportionably larger. One may embrace *this* special object, another *that:* one may find the readiest access to this country, another to that country: external circumstances may give one an advantage for a particular kind of service, from which the other may be precluded: each may, as it were, bring into circulation the treasure of wisdom and piety, as well as influence, which is found in its particular circle; and they may all profit by the counsels, plans, observations, success or failures, of every one; and help one another in various ways, when that assistance becomes especially seasonable. Thus, more methods may be tried, more talents brought into exercise, more information and wisdom acquired, and more exertion made by several societies, amicably striving together for the faith of the gospel, than by one.—As divers kinds of soldiers form a better army, than if they were all exactly of the same description, armed in the same manner, and formed into one vast phalanx; provided they have no other competition, but who shall best serve the common cause.*

---

* First Sermon before the Society for Missions to Africa and the East.

'One society should not be considered as opposing 'any that are engaged for the same purpose. The 'world is an extensive field, and in the church of 'Christ there is no competition of interests. From 'the very constitution of the human mind, slighter 'differences of opinion will prevail, and diversities in 'external forms; but, in the grand design of promot-'ing Christianity, all these should disappear.'*

In general, the interest of a charitable or pious institution, properly speaking, is the power possessed by that society of glorifying God, and doing good to men: and if good can be more advantageously done by another society, it is equally entitled to assistance and support; and the wise and benevolent will countenance all, in proportion as likely to be useful, and none in opposition to the rest.

These considerations have determined me to undertake the present service, though well aware that some persons might misunderstand my intention, or object to my conduct.—But still, a difficulty of no small magnitude seemed placed in my way.

Almost, if not entirely, every subject relating to missions, has been pre-occupied; and this, not only from the pulpit, but in the more permanent form of printed sermons, collected in volumes.—What more can be said or needs be said, concerning the deplorable state of the Gentiles? or the obligations of christians, according to their ability to attempt their conversion? What objection to such exertions remains

---

* Account of the Society for Missions to Africa and the East.

unanswered, or inadequately answered? Can any thing, except ignorance, selfishness, indolence, and indifference about the honour of God and the salvation of souls, maintain any further opposition to the general design? On which side soever the subject is viewed, it might seem to be exhausted; nay, a peculiar kind of genius is necessary, even to say the same things in another way, and with the appearance of novelty or variety.

Their is, however, one encouraging consideration; that repetition itself, if restricted to the more essential topicks, cannot prevent a plain and earnest discourse, from affecting and interesting every compassionate and pious mind.

But in fact, a circumstance, which can scarcely be too deeply regretted, determined me to the text which I have chosen, and to which I now return. I mean the difficulty that has been found, in procuring an adequate number of competent missionaries, especially among our own countrymen, by several of the societies instituted for this important object. This, I am persuaded, has exceedingly tended to prevent success, and in many instances has chilled the ardour, and checked the liberality, which would otherwise have been manifested.

I would by no means, be supposed to intimate that nothing, or that but little, has been done. My views of the transactions which have taken place, since this society was instituted, are very different. I am persuaded, far more important good has been done, and preparations made, and far more extensively beneficial effects will follow, from these exertions, than it is

generally supposed, or than do at present appear. Yet the want of a far greater number of missionaries, endued with the genuine spirit, has had a greater effect in retarding our progress, than any backwardness of the publick to pecuniary aid; nay, than the unfavourable circumstances of these eventful times; or even the heavy losses and severe disappointments, by which it hath pleased God to try the faith and patience of the active and zealous friends to the cause.

A more particular consideration of our Lord's command to his disciples, as contained in our text, therefore, seems not unseasonable to the occasion: and may he so direct and prosper what shall be spoken, that it may produce a more general and earnest compliance with the important injunction!

We find the same words, or nearly, spoken by our Lord on two distinct occasions: first, when he appointed the twelve apostles;* and secondly, when he sent forth the seventy disciples. The context in the former instance calls for our peculiar attention. "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with "compassion on them; because they fainted, and were "scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. "Then, saith he to his disciples, The harvest truly is "plenteous, but the labourers are few: pray ye there-"fore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth "labourers into his harvest."

By comparing this passage with St. Luke, it appears highly probable, that at this important crisis,

* Matt. ix. 36, 38.

" Jesus went up into a mountain to pray, and conti-
" nued all night in prayer to God."*

At the time when our Lord gave this injunction, and enforced it by his own example; the spiritual worship of the true God was at a very low ebb. The Jews were generally satisfied with barren forms and notions, and with human traditions; their teachers were blind guides and hypocrites; and their builders disdainfully rejected the precious Corner-stone which God had chosen:—while the Gentiles, (that is all other nations,) were sunk in gross idolatry, except that a few had philosophized themselves and each other into various kinds of practical atheism. So that they were " without Christ, without hope, and without God in " the world." A remnant no doubt, was found in Judea and in other countries, both of pious Jews, and of Gentiles, who by their means had got access to the Greek version of the scriptures, and, like Cornelius, were earnestly enquiring after the salvation and the Saviour there revealed: (a most encouraging circumstance to those who are now labouring to get the scriptures, or part of them, translated into different languages, and diffused among the nations!) Yet the state of the world was, in general, most deplorable.— " Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the " people."

But it had been foretold, that in the times of the Messiah, " the Gentiles would come to the light, " and kings to the brightness of his rising." Nay, " that he should be for a Light to the Gentiles, and

---

* Luke vi. 12, 13.

" for Salvation to the ends of the earth." It was the revealed purpose of God, to break down the partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles; to revive the power of godliness among a large number of the former, and by their means to bring into the church an immense multitude of the latter: so that, in a short time, the true worshippers of the living God should be increased a thousand, nay, ten thousand fold. This was the plenteous harvest, to which our blessed Lord referred, in the words of my text.

But the labourers were few, very few, compared with the harvest. There were, indeed, many priests and scribes, who were ministers of religion according to the immediate appointment of God; or teachers of the people, who sat in Moses's chair; and why should not these be employed?

Do you ask, Why? the answer is obvious:—Because they set themselves against the Messiah and his cause. And in every age, they who follow their steps, and persevere in so doing, will be laid aside and excluded from any share in the honourable service, however regular their external appointment: and others from a different quarter, will be sent forth as labourers into the harvest, amidst the objections and opposition of those who are thus superseded.

At that awful crisis, when the scribes, and priests, and rulers stood around the cross of Immanuel, and joined with the multitude in scoffing at his dying agonies, and making even his undeniable and beneficent miracles the subject of their cruel and impious mockery; when the apostles concealed themselves through fear; the seventy disciples seemed finally dispersed,

and almost every favourer of the cause was led to despair of it: had any one, at that crisis, I say, stood forth and predicted, that within two months many thousands would trust in the crucified Nazarene, as their almighty Saviour, worship him as their God, obey him as their exalted King, and wait for his coming as their omniscient Judge; and that within twenty or thirty years, unnumbered millions, through a vast extent of countries, inhabited by tribes most discordant in their manners and interests, would determine to glory in him and in his cross alone: and should he have added, that all this would be accomplished by means of heralds or preachers sent forth among the nations, who would so love the despised and insulted Nazarene, as not to value even their lives, in comparison of his honour, and his cause, and the conversion of the nations to him: would not this, my brethren, have been derided, as the illusion of partial regard, or the dream of frantick enthusiasm? Yet all this was even vastly exceeded!—The disciples, recovered from their stupor, prayed to the Lord of the harvest, and he sent forth labourers, by hundreds and by thousands, whose zeal, courage, patience, philanthropy, wisdom, and self-denial, are above all praise, and even exceed the imagination of most christians, in this Laodicean age. Many, who at the time of our Lord's crucifixion, or long after, were either totally indifferent, or determined opposers, became zealous heralds of Immanuel's glory: a multitude of the priests were obedient to the faith; and in all probability employed, as reconciled themselves to God, to proclaim the word of reconciliation. And though the perse-

cutor Saul by no means closed the list of that company, who at length preached the faith which once they destroyed; yet he stands so pre-eminent and distinguished above the rest, that it would be highly improper not to mention such a signal instance of the omnipotent grace of God, and the efficacy of believing prayer. For doubtless, many, with dying Stephen, prayed for the murderers of that first martyr, and the persecutors of the infant church, among whom Saul stood forth the most active and violent zealot.

From the time that the apostles and the remnant of believers saw and adored their risen Lord, it may reasonably be supposed that they recollected and obeyed the injunction of our text. But it should especially be noted, that from his ascension, to the day of Pentecost, the whole company continued in unremitting prayer and supplication; and on the day of Pentecost, they were all with one accord in one place, doubtless engaged in the same manner, when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them. Immediately, not only were the apostles endued with the gift of tongues, and animated to a degree of zeal and courage, far beyond what they had before manifested; but the prophecy of Joel, as quoted by St. Peter, was literally fulfilled,* and multitudes, like Isaiah when the Seraph had touched his lips with a coal from the altar, were ready to say, "Here am I, send me:" though just before, many of them were involved in the guilt of murdering, or consenting to the murder, of the

* Joel ii. 28, 29. Acts ii.

Prince of Life! Such effects were then produced by the Lord of the harvest, in answer to the prayers of a small company! Let us not forget that he is "the same "yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

The zeal, the courage, the compassion for perishing sinners, cannot be so low at present, as it was when Christ died on the cross; believers are immensely more numerous; and prejudices cannot be so strong and general against his cause, nor can the minds of men be so repugnant to the work, and danger, and hardship, of attempting to evangelize the Gentiles, as at that crisis. Who then can say, but that within a few years, or even months, hundreds, yea, thousands of labourers, like the first evangelists, may be sent forth into the harvest?

To fix the impression, which I should hope this plain statement of facts from the sacred records has made, I shall,

I. Briefly consider the largeness of the harvest.

II. The small number of the labourers.

III. The duty and efficacy of prayer in this behalf.

I. The largeness of the harvest.

And here, my brethren, I must assume those principles, which pervade the scripture; namely, man's fallen and depraved state and character, in whatever part of the globe he inhabits, and his exposedness to the righteous indignation of God on that account: insomuch that, as his soul is immortal, and his body shall rise again, he must be finally lost and for ever miserable, unless he be reconciled to God, and renew-

ed to holiness. Every unconverted sinner on earth, viewed in connexion with the gospel, and the command of Christ to his disciples, to preach it to every creature, and the hope that he may be converted and saved, should in this respect be considered as a part of the harvest.

Now, you well know, my beloved brethren, that even in christian countries, even in Britain, there are vast multitudes of this description. If indeed regeneration, repentance, faith, love of God and man, and holiness, be necessary to salvation, who can help exclaiming, "How strait is the gate, how narrow is the "way that leadeth unto life! how few there be that "find it!" How few among my acquaintance seem to know any thing of it! Ignorance, irreligion, formality; damnable heresies or barren orthodoxy; absurd superstition, or wild enthusiasm; pharisaical self-righteousness, or some kind or other of antinomian abuse of the gospel, occupy a very large proportion of the christian world; in which infidelity of late has made extensive depredations.

View the vast proportion of professed christians, who still support the tottering cause of the papal Antichrist; and that multitude, who are hood-winked in the half popery of the Greek church! Then view the reformed and protestant churches: and ask yourselves, whether, in case the multitudes of nominal christians, should ever become true christians, the harvest even here, be not very plenteous?

Then cast your eye on the poor, the pitiable and yet generally unpitied, Jews. Through them we have all our light and hope: yet the darkness in which they

are enveloped, is darkness that may be felt. All the prophets and apostles were Israelites, and almost all the sacred writers; yea, our Saviour himself was a Jew. Yet how are they neglected! even more than Mahometans, or pagans! Perhaps that nation is now more numerous than it was in the days of Solomon. What a plenteous harvest here then presents itself to our view and our hope! Oh that some plan of persevering attempts for their conversion might be formed!

I will only hint at the vast and populous regions of China, Tartary, Japan, Hindostan; in short all the continent of Asia, containing perhaps four hundred millions of inhabitants; dying, yet immortal; sinners, yet generally without even the means of grace; and how then should they have the hope of glory? Idolaters with their bloody sacrifices and detestable rites: or Mahometans, sunk in sloth and sensuality, and buoyed up with pride, and the ambition of proselyting by the sword!

Nor shall I dilate on the abject state of the unnumbered multitudes, inhabiting much-injured Africa; nations yet unvisited by avarice or ambition; who never heard of christians or Britons, but by report from those distant shores, that have felt the detestable crimes of men, who disgrace at once their country and their religion. Their brethren also, the wretched Africans in our West Indian islands, whom their cruel lords of late seemed determined to deprive of consolation and of hope, in prohibiting the preaching of Christianity to them, by men who have shewn themselves, willing to fare as slaves themselves, for

the pleasure of imparting to poor negro slaves, the blessed gospel of God our Saviour. What a contrast between the missionaries and the slave holders! They seem not to be of the same species: certainly, in one sense, they are not of the same nature.

I have heard, indeed, that this cruel law is repealed; and cheerfully do I pray, that the legislators of it, and all that counselled it, may "repent and do works "worthy of repentance," for their own sakes at least as much, as for the sake of the missionaries and the negroes.

The vast regions of America, the numerous isles of the immense oceans which separate the continents; all, all inhabited by human beings! all, living without Christ, and dying without hope!

This, my brethren, is the field from which the plenteous harvest is to be gathered, when labourers shall be sent forth for that purpose.

But let us take another view of the subject.—Have we any reason to hope, that the Lord of the harvest purposes to convert the nations, or any considerable part of them, to the christian faith? Or that he purposes to do it ere long? Have we any such ground to proceed upon, as Daniel had, respecting the end of the seventy years of Judah's captivity? Or as the Jews had, in the days of Christ, that Daniel's seventy weeks were about to close?

It is very readily conceded, that many vain attempts have been made to apply particular prophecies to the transactions of this extraordinary age: indeed the prophetical part of scripture seems to be, so to speak, a map on too small a scale, to shew every place that appears considerable in its vicinity. Particular interpre-

tation seldom is accurately given, by uninspired contemporaries, who are generally too much interested in the transactions of the times; too much disposed to magnify events, in which themselves are concerned, beyond their due proportion; and too prejudiced in various ways, to be sufficiently calm and impartial for such a work. But beyond all doubt, the scriptures do foretel a season, when all kings shall submit to the Redeemer, "all nations shall do him service;" when "the kingdoms of the earth shall become the king-"doms of the Lord and of his Christ;" and when "the old serpent shall be bound up for a thousand "years, and deceive the nations no more."

Surely it is predicted that the man of sin shall be destroyed by the brightness of the Saviour's coming and glory; that the reign of every Antichrist in the holy city shall terminate; that the veil will be taken away from the hearts of the blinded Jews, and they shall turn in penitent faith to their crucified Messiah, and be grafted into their own olive-tree; that this shall be as life from the dead to the nations of the earth; and that at length all people shall so entirely obey the Prince of peace, as to beat their swords into plow-shares, and to learn war no more.

To suppose that the Holy Spirit, by these exalted expressions, foretold events no way answerable to their exact meaning; and that they are nothing more than highly-wrought figures of speech, like those of eastern poets, and suited to excite expectations in simple-hearted believers, which must be eternally disappointed, savours too much of infidelity, not to say blasphemy, to deserve in this connexion a serious confutation.

The prophet Daniel and the apostle John, both mark out with great care and accuracy, a period of "a "time, and times, and half a time," of three years and a half, forty and two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days: and surely we are as much required to compute these months or days, if we are able, as the Jews were to calculate Daniel's seventy weeks. Now, date the beginning of this term as late as any respectable expositor yet hath done, we cannot be far from the close of it. The seventh trumpet, if not sounding, is about to sound: the witnesses in sackcloth will soon close their testimony, whatever be meant by their death and resurrection; and the kingdoms of the earth, will soon be the kingdoms of Christ.

It is not reasonable to suppose that transactions of so vast a magnitude, should be accomplished at once. —Even the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity had several beginnings and correspondent terminations, as learned men have shewn: and a hundred years is no long term, in the case before us.

But I feel a confidence in giving it as my opinion, grounded on careful examination, that these prophecies will soon begin to be accomplished; and that within two or three centuries, at furthest, "the earth "shall be filled with the glory of the LORD, as the "waters cover the sea."

We, like David, shall not live to build this temple: but it will "be well, if it is in our hearts;" and even we may hope to bring stones and timber, and iron, and brass, and silver, and gold, which the true Solomon will employ in that sacred edifice.

Indeed, I cannot doubt, but that the missionary designs of the present period, if prosecuted with persevering zeal and improving wisdom and experience, will be honoured as an introduction to those great events. We shall "labour, and others will enter into "our labours," (as we have into those of our predecessors:) but at length, "both he that soweth and he "that reapeth shall rejoice together: for we gather "fruit, and shall receive wages, unto everlasting "life."

II. We proceed then, to consider the small number of the labourers.

I would by no means represent the number of the labourers to be less than it really is: but it must be evident that all, who bear the *name* of christian ministers, are not such labourers as our Lord intended. Beyond doubt, there are now, as there were in old times, "blind guides," drowsy "watchmen who do "not give warning," "idol-shepherds," with others of like character, who either do not labour at all, or else belong to that company which our blessed Saviour points out, when he says, "he that is not with me is "against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth."

In order to constitute a true labourer, scriptural doctrine, (at least in all the grand outlines of evangelical truth applied to holy purposes,) must be connected with an edifying example, and zealous self-denying diligence in the work of the ministry, as the one business and delight of a man's life. There was indeed no want of teachers in Israel, yea, authorized ministers in religion, according to the divine law, as

to their external commission, at the time when the compassionate Saviour made this affecting remark: yet alas! neither their doctrine, nor their example, nor their diligence, were at all suited to lead men into the way of eternal life; nay, their conduct and influence united to keep the people from Christ and his salvation.

On the other hand it is readily conceded, that every minister or missionary in whom these qualifications are found, is a labourer for Christ, in whatever part of the world he is employed, or in whatever way he is distinguished from his fellow christians. If he "cast out devils in the name of Christ," let us never think of forbidding him, "because he follows not "with us;" but rather wish him success in the name of the Lord.

The present occasion, indeed, calls our attention chiefly to the Gentile world; yet our subject can hardly allow us to pass over in total silence the state of professed Christians; among whom, it may justly be feared, the labourers, (such as the Lord of the harvest) will at last welcome with these most gracious words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou in- "to the joy of thy Lord," are comparatively few. But whatever may be our opinion on this subject, let me remind you, my brethren, that asperity, reproach, and sarcasm are no weapons of our warfare; and that the use of them on this subject only excites resentment and strengthens prejudice. We should therefore pity and pray for, those, whom we consider as in error, and as misleading others.

This may be so done, as to give no needless offence; and, (except in peculiar cases,) when united to a good example, and a "readiness to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the "hope that is in us, with meekness and fear," is all that ought to be done.

I shall not, however, enlarge on this subject. Whatever may be the case of Britain in respect of faithful labourers; I fear that they are proportionably much fewer in Ireland, though now united with Britain in one kingdom.—But what shall we say of the continent? What proportion of such labourers, as our Lord approves, is found in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and a great part of Germany? even supposing the reformed and protestant churches more adequately supplied. What shall we think of France, hostile France, the religious state of whose inhabitants is enough to draw tears from every reflecting christian, how near soever his country lies to his heart?

Think also, my brethren, on the Jews, dispersed through the world, without *one* faithful stated labourer! View Asia, with her immense population! A few missionaries, sent by different societies in England and on the continent, have been, and are, zealously and ably endeavouring to evangelize the Hindoos and others; among whom the well-known highly venerable name of Swartz is peculiarly distinguished, as employed in the work, with unwearied diligence, for half a century; and many others, of different names, are entitled to a high degree of our affection and commendation: and I doubt not but many of them will at length be revered and lamented by vast multitudes,

in the same manner that the apostolical Swartz and Gerrickè, now are.

No doubt there are also some, (I hope far more than we know of,) resident ministers of genuine piety and zeal: yet after all, what are these, compared with their sphere of activity? The vast regions of China and Japan, perhaps without a single labourer! I would speak with deference to the judgment of those, who have fuller information, and should be greatly pleased to be detected in an error; but I own, I fear, that all the faithful labourers in Asia would little more than suffice, for the adequate religious instruction of *one* of the largest counties in this little island.

But it is needless to enlarge: a few missionaries from this society, whose labours are very exemplary, and promise great success; some also from other societies, and with no great number of resident ministers in two or three districts, seems the whole provision for the vast continent of Africa!

Wherever we cast our eyes on a map of the globe, or read in treatises on geography, or books of travels; the same reflection on the religious state of the inhabitants forces itself on the pious and benevolent mind, when accustomed to view each individual of our species, in his relation to an eternal world!

The descendants of the European colonies in North-America, may be as well supplied with labourers in the harvest, as the countries from which they migrated; perhaps better: and it is a source of consolation to hear, that several societies have been formed for the purpose of evangelizing the remnant of the an-

cient inhabitants. But the check given to the missionaries, in some of our West-India Islands, damps the joy, with which we before heard of the unwearied and successful endeavours of the Moravians, Methodists, and others, among the poor negroes: while South America, it may well be feared, is shared almost entirely between the grossest popery and the most abject pagan idolatry!

I do not hint at these things, my brethren, for your information; as many present are capable, on this subject, of rectifying my errors and instructing my ignorance: but merely, that by converging these scattered rays of intelligence, as it were, into one *focus*, they may produce the greater effect in animating your exertions, increasing the ardour of your gratitude, zeal, and love, and melting your hearts into compassion for the souls of your perishing fellow creatures.

Methinks some are inwardly saying, 'The state of 'the world is indeed deplorable, but what can *I* do 'to improve it? I have neither strength of constitu- 'tion, nor vigour of mind, nor qualifications for a 'missionary:' or, '*my* time of life and engagements 'forbid me to think of it. I contribute according to 'my ability to support missions, and perhaps, if an 'emergency required, I should deny myself in some- 'thing that might be spared, in order to contribute 'still further: I am willing also to give a portion of 'my time to the managing of such matters, relative 'to missions, as I am competent for: and what can I 'do more?'

Another may be reflecting 'I have little money to 'bestow, or time to spare, or talent, or influence. I

'indeed wish well to the cause; and that is almost all 'which I have in my power.'

While some may say, that 'a good deal has already 'been done: several missionaries are now successfully 'employed, others are preparing, and others are on 'their voyages to the destined sphere of their exer- 'tions. As many are thus engaged as the finances of 'the society can support, though far from what the 'state of the world requires; and we must not "de- "spise the day of small things." Yet, perhaps, if we 'could announce still greater success of our mission- 'aries, and did proper persons offer for the work; as 'far as can be judged from the past, we might expect 'that the publick would come forward, bad as the 'times are, and enable us to support them also.'

Now the admonition of our Lord, in the text, seems exactly suited to thoughts and reflections of this kind, which are often made, I doubt not, by many in this assembly: "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord "of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers "into his harvest:" Not only pray for the missionaries already sent forth, or about to be sent, but earnestly intreat the Fountain of all good, to raise up and send forth a more adequate supply.

III. On this part of our subject, my brethren, let us observe,

That this is more evidently and entirely the Lord's work, than any thing in the whole undertaking; and that which above all others leaves us sensibly almost incapable of attempting any thing, except as God immediately interposes. Active and zealous men may use a variety of methods for exciting the publick at-

tention to the subject, and in forming societies, and raising contributions; and at first, while this is doing with success, some may be ready to think, the grand difficulty is now removed: yet after all, the whole may be like a well-constructed mill, on a stream which has entirely failed; and all the admirable machinery is quite useless, because no water can possibly be procured.

No doubt, the faithful preaching of the gospel, and animated instructions and exhortations on the subject of missions, are proper means of calling forth missionaries. But, as God alone can give the increase, even in the conversion of sinners; our dependence on his omnipotent grace is still more sensibly felt, when christians, fitted for peculiarly difficult services, are wanted. Even a stated pastor, if able and faithful, is a man *of a peculiar turn of mind*, in many respects different from other christians; and such a turn of mind as God bestows on some, and not on all, his people; according to the important question in the ordination service of our church, 'Do you trust that you 'are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon 'you this office and ministration, to serve God for the 'promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people?' For no one can honestly answer this question in the affirmative, who does not from his heart prefer the work of the ministry, and the glory of God in the salvation of souls, independently of outward emoluments or distinctions, to all other employments, however lucrative, creditable, or easy.

But a missionary, such a missionary as the cause requires, is in *the turn of his mind* more disinguished

from other ministers, than they are from other christians. He is the hero in the spiritual warfare; he takes pleasure in labours, and hardships, and dangers, for the cause of Christ. His bowels yearn, his heart melts, over perishing sinners in distant regions, of whom he knows nothing but by report. He is prepared to leave his country, his friends, his prospects, and the comforts of civilized society, to brave seas and deserts, inhospitable and unhealthy climates: he "puts his life "in his hand," and traverses the vast forests amid the howlings of savage beasts, and ventures among human beings more fierce than even lions or tigers. He longs to be permitted to live among these wretched barbarians, in their rude and hardy way, that he may, by the best and most effectual method, endeavour to soften their manners, and meliorate their character; namely, by preaching the doctrine and copying the example of Christ. And every instance of success in the arduous attempt of their conversion, he values more, than the soldier does his spoil or laurels, or the merchant his abundant gain. Having put his hand to the plough, he will not look back, except his impaired health and strength oblige him. When unsuccessful in one place, and driven from it by persecution, and hardly escaping with life, he preaches the gospel in another, with unabated courage and ardour.—If disabled for a time, he longs to return to his work, and grieves more, because compelled for a while to decline it, than for all his pain and weakness; and when recovered he makes haste to the scene of his disinterested labours.

Witness your missionary lately in England, who tasted no bread for six months, besides enduring many other hardships and escaping many imminent dangers; yet was he all in earnest, to leave the comforts of his native country, that he might return to the scene of his labours in the wilds of Africa; and who, after severe experience of the missionary's life, repeatedly refused a very comfortable settlement, out of love to the poor natives among whom he laboured!*

Yet all this heroical resolution must be accompanied with a mild, forbearing, and gentle spirit; with the greatest tenderness and affection; with command over every passion; superiority to all those inclinations which enslave mankind in general, and an assiduous perseverance, amidst discouragements, often during many years of ill success.

Not to recur to the primitive times, when evangelists, who far exceeded this feeble description, spread the gospel through the nations: Swartz, Elliot, Brainerd, and many among the Moravians and others, stand as demonstrations, that the Lord of the harvest is still able to send forth such labourers.

Yet all this is so contrary to human nature, and to the education and habits of men in civilized regions, and especially in such an affluent and luxurious country as Britain; that at first view one is almost apt to despond, and to conclude it impracticable to obtain missionaries of this stamp and character.

---

* Mr. Kircherer.

Sanguine adventurers, indeed, may at any time be found, ready to volunteer their services almost in any cause: but where shall men of this eminence and excellence be found? "With man it is impossible, but "with God all things are possible."

Call to mind, my brethren, the case before stated, at the opening of our subject.

Where, at the time when the Saviour expired on the cross, were the preachers, who soon after carried his gospel through the extent of the then known world: Where were they, who so laboured and prospered, that had others trodden in their steps, it might seem as if our exertions would scarcely have been wanted? All these, almost, were at that time proud and selfish Jews, or blind idolaters, and the rest were prejudiced, disheartened, and cowardly disciples. "Is then the "LORD's arm shortened, that he cannot save?" out of these stones he can raise up, not only children unto Abraham, but, genuine successors to the primitive missionaries. Nor is there a scoffer, a profligate, an opposer, a coward, or a man buried in the pursuit of worldly riches, in this congregation, that he could not endure with all the zeal, and love, and courage, and wisdom of an apostle.

He needs only speak with power, and say, as he did to Matthew the publican, at the seat of custom; "Arise, and follow me," and he would "leave all "and follow him." Oh, "pray ye therefore the Lord "of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers "into his harvest."

Observe again, my brethren, that this is an aid, though of primary importance, in which the poor, and

the unlearned and obscure, may concur as effectually as the wealthy, the learned, and the eminent. All cannot give, though inclined to do it; but every one can pray, whose heart is so disposed: and every one may beg of God to give him the spirit of grace and supplication, of fervent zeal and expansive philanthropy. And he, who prays constantly and earnestly, for the success of missionary designs, and that the Lord would furnish the missionaries, and prosper their labours, will be found a more valuable friend to the cause, than he who gives his money or his time; nay, than he who preaches sermons, and writes books to promote it, if he do not also unite with them his fervent prayers.

It may be thought, as the cause is that of God, he will accomplish his own purpose for his own name's sake, whether we pray or no. But let any impartial person simply regard the sacred oracles, and the outlines of ecclesiastical history, and ask himself, whether a fervent spirit of prayer, by the remnant of believers, have not always preceded great revivals in religion, and gracious interpositions of God for his church?

Reasonings against scriptural instruction and undeniable fact, must be false and vain, however specious. Nothing can be more enlarged and unencumbered, than the promises of God to Israel by Ezekiel; but after all, it is subjoined, "I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them."*

* Ez. xxxvi. 24, 37.

Thus also Jeremiah, or rather God by him, "I know "the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the "LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give "you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon "me, and shall go and pray unto me; and I will "hearken unto you; and ye shall seek me and find "me, when ye shall search for me with all your "heart."*

Accordingly, Daniel, (as did doubtless many others,) set himself to seek the Lord by fasting and prayer, just before the Jews were restored from captivity.

We have seen that the apostles and disciples continued instant in prayer, before the Holy Spirit was poured out at the day of Pentecost. The church of Antioch was fasting and praying, when Saul and Barnabas were called forth to go and preach to the Gentiles, eventually to Europeans; whence we Britons have received our marvellous light, and invaluable advantages.

Prayer especially honours God, and God honours prayer; it brings the soul into a humble, dependent, waiting, expecting frame, and prepares the way for thanksgiving: and therefore, it is proper, both in our private concern and in publick undertakings, that prayer, fervent persevering prayer, should precede every important success.

My brethren, allow me to make a remark thus publickly, which I have often made more privately; namely, that there is in general, too small a propor-

* Jer. xxix. 10, 13.

tion by far, of supplication or intercession, in the devotions of christians of the present day. Selfishness seems even to infect our religion: we seek comfort, and perhaps sanctification, for ourselves, the company, and our particular circle: but, except on special occasions, we are not apt to enlarge, to multiply our petitions and fill our mouths with arguments, in pleading for our fellow christians and fellow sinners, throughout the world; or even for our own country, and the church of God that is amongst us.

A number of christians sometimes agree on a particular emergency, to unite at certain times in some special requests; or meetings for prayer are appointed for such purposes: and doubtless this is highly proper, and conducive to much good. Yet prayer, thus called forth, seems to resemble the forced productions of the hot-bed, rather than the natural growth of the soil: they are raised indeed, as water from a deep well; but do not flow spontaneously, like streams from a fountain. A disposition, without any effort, to unite and enlarge, in our families, our social meetings, and, of course, in our closets, as well as in publick worship, or at particular seasons, for the purity, peace, and enlargement of the church; for the illumination and sanctification, and prosperity of all her ministers; for the conversion of Jews, Turks, infidels, and hereticks; for the sending forth of labourers into the harvest: I say, such a disposition for prayer in these and similar respects, does not seem so congenial to the minds of christians in general, as one would suppose it must be, from the principles on which they rest all their hope and confidence.

My sphere of observation is but contracted: and if any say, I have not found it so among my friends and brethren, I congratulate him; but this I confess, is the impression that I have received during the years of my acquaintance with evangelical persons.

Indeed it is my decided opinion, that nothing could so effectually promote the cause, not only of missions, but of christianity in all respects, as a general concern among all christians; not only on some special days or hours, but constantly, whenever they prayed, to remember, either more generally, or fully, the case of unconverted sinners, of the heathen and the poor Jews, with that of missions and missionaries, and the sending forth of labourers; in particular, the raising up of missionaries and ministers among the natives of those countries which we attempt to evangelize; as this alone can give a prospect of enlarged and permanent success. This indeed, would be well calculated to excite a missionary spirit: but it is especially urged from a full conviction, that it will be the introduction, when God is about to "fill the earth with his "glory, as the waters cover the sea."

An early acquaintance with the writings of president Edwards, Brainerd, and the New England divines, gave my mind a peculiar turn to this subject. The nations unacquainted with Christ have ever since lain near my heart: and I never thought a prayer complete in which they were wholly forgotten. This was the case several years before societies for missions, (that is, new societies in England,) were established: but I could do no more than offer my feeble prayers.

Since that time new and animating scenes have opened to our view; and now, far beyond my expectation, I have lived, for the second time, to recommend from the pulpit the missionary cause, which I do with the most unreserved cordiality. It ought to be dearer to each of us than our lives: Oh, may we then, more than ever, pour out our daily and fervent prayers for its success, whenever attempted; and that the Lord of the harvest himself would send forth labourers into his harvest.

Let us, my Brethren, consider the Saviour himself as in the midst of us; as witnessing our consultations, plans, and difficulties; and especially our earnest enquiries, 'What more can we do?' and let us suppose, that he, with his own gracious lips subjoined, in the language of authority and love, the injunction of the text; and then let us consider, what effect it would have on our subsequent conduct.

But Oh, how deplorable the case of Britons, of persons acquainted with the gospel, yet living without prayer, or resting only in lifeless form! who cannot pray for their country, or their nearest relatives, much less for the heathen, because they have not yet learned to pray for themselves! It is not, however, yet too late: "Seek then the LORD while he may be found; call "upon him while he is near."

For, "When once the Master of the house is risen "up, and hath shut to the door; and ye begin to stand "without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, "Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say "unto you, I know you not, whence ye are. Then "shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in

" thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.
" But he shall say, I tell you I know not whence
" ye are: depart from me all ye workers of iniquity.
" There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth:
" When ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob,
" and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God; and
" you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come
" from the east, and from the west, and from the
" north, and from the south; and shall sit down in
" the kingdom of God. And behold there are last
" which shall be first, and there are first which shall
" be last."*

A thought at this moment darts across my mind, which gives me pain and discouragement. There are, I know, even religious persons, apparently so at least, who disapprove the design, and endeavour to damp the ardour of those engaged in it; or at least cannot concur in any plan, till a sort of Utopian perfection, according to their notions, can be discerned in the plans and in the managers of the business.

I shall only say, that had such notions generally prevailed in our Lord's days, and in subsequent ages, *we* should now have been idolaters; if, in the times of Luther and his successors in reformation; *we* must also have continued papists. Join your efforts at least with some of our societies; and let us have your prayers for them all.

Let no christian make unworthiness, or discouragement, or want of liberty in prayer, an excuse or reason for neglecting this bounden duty. In general,

---

* Luke xiii. 24—30.

prayer for others is the best preparation for pouring out our own complaints before God, with confidence and comfort: and did we more generally begin, as our Lord hath taught us, "Hallowed be thy name, thy "kingdom come: thy will be done, in earth, as in "heaven:" we should more generally conclude with animated alacrity, "For thine," O LORD, "is the "kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever and "ever." Amen.

THE

RIGHTS OF GOD.

Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Isaiah xli. 21.

Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen: I will be exalted in the earth. Ps. xlvi. 10.

PREFACE.

"THE Rights of Man" have of late engrossed much of the publick attention: and though, by transgression, man hath forfeited all rights, in respect of God, except to the wages of sin; yet in reference to his fellow creatures, he has many and valuable rights, of which he cannot without injustice be abridged. He has a right, with some restrictions, to enjoy the produce of his own labour and ingenuity, to leave it to his children or friends, and to possess what others have left to him. He has a right to think and judge for himself, and to follow his own inclinations; provided he be not inclined to injure, or molest, other men: and he has a right to liberty of conscience; unless his conscience should excite him to disturb the peace and good order of the community.

Many other rights of men might be mentioned, which are unequivocal, intelligible, and indisputable, if we consider him in society: for, an absolute state of nature must be universal hostility, in which every man would be his own defender and avenger; and all would be prompted by their selfish passions to annoy each other, except as restrained by fear, conscience, or attachment to a few individuals.

However, justice is still the same, and *power* is in every case distinct from *right:* and though we must give up many things, to which we should otherwise be entitled, in order to possess the immense advantages of civilized society; yet, laws should certainly be so made and executed, that all may enjoy as much liberty as can consist with the existence, energy, and maintenance of government.

But some things are at present insisted on, as "the Rights of "Man," which are not well understood, and are incapable of a precise and determinate definition. Whatever they may seem in theory, they are absolutely impracticable in the present condition of human nature; and every attempt to establish them will probably produce confusion and mischief.

This is not, however, my principal objection to these speculations. Let the men of the world try what they can do to mend their present condition; whilst the disciples of Him, "whose "kingdom is not of this world," may be contented to take matters as they find them, and peaceably to keep on their way to a better and more enduring inheritance. But the most affecting circumstance is, that whilst warm disputes about the *Rights of Man* occupy the attention of multitudes, the *Rights of God* are proportionably disregarded. The eager disputants on both sides of the question too much overlook them; but many on one side most outrageously trample upon, and even blaspheme them; as if the great Creator alone had no rights! Or as if it were one of the rights of man to despise and defy him, in whom he lives, moves, and exists!

It will not, therefore, I trust, be deemed unseasonable at this juncture, if an advocate, (though a feeble one,) venture forth to plead in behalf of the *Rights of God:* as he is the Creator, providential Benefactor, and moral Governor of the universe; and in respect of his dealings with those creatures which have rebelled against him. Such is the intention and plan of the ensuing treatise; by which I would endeavour, in this day of scepticism and infidelity, to establish the faith of believers, and to assist them in "giving a reason of the hope that is in them:" and to obviate some specious objections which philosophizing deists or scepticks have started against revelation, or some of the doctrines, commandments, or transactions contained in it: and at the same time I shall attempt to lead men's attention to religion, as true and practical wisdom, and their grand interest both here and hereafter. Since, therefore, our subject is of the greatest importance to every man, I would intreat the reader to consider it with patient and serious application, as well as with candour and impartiality; nor can it justly be censured as irrational, if he be reminded to accompany the perusal with prayer to the Father of lights, and the Giver of every good gift, to bestow upon him that wisdom which comes from above, and which guides the humble and teachable in the way to everlasting felicity.

THE

RIGHTS OF GOD.

INTRODUCTION.

IT would be a waste of time to offer many arguments in proof of the existence of a God: for though many avow themselves atheists or scepticks; yet their hearts are more disorderd than their understandings. "The fool hath said in his heart—no God; they are "corrupt, they have done abominable works."* They wish that there were no God to controul or punish them; they hope, and try to believe, that there is none, this induces them to search for objections and sophistical arguments against the truth, and thus, through Satan's delusions, and in the righteous judgment of God, they become converts to atheism, or a scepticism bordering upon it; and then to elude conviction, and to keep themselves in countenance, they commence apostles of their impious opinions. But in reality, the existense of the creation, or indeed of any

* Ps. xiv. 1.

creature, is a sufficient proof that there is a God who made all things; as the most acute reasoners have shewn, especially the celebrated Mr. Locke: and he, that lives, moves, thinks, and acts, must be left without excuse, if he deny or forget God, or refuse to honour him, and be thankful to him. Reason and common sense confirm this verdict of inspiration: so that the man who withstands the evidence of this argument, is not likely to be convinced by rational deductions; and will probably continue an infidel, till convinced of his fatal mistake, by experiencing the indignation of that God whom he hath denied.

But among those, who, in words at least, thus far assent to our principles, there are great numbers, who seem to exclude the Creator from the government of the world; and from any right to the obedience or worship of mankind. Some speak ambiguously about creation, and try to account for every thing by the operation of second causes, instead of resolving the whole into the omnipotent *Fiat* of the first great Cause. Others argue, as if God had constituted the universe at first in such perfection, that the laws of nature alone were sufficient to preserve its regular order, without his immediate interposition. They seem to think, that it would be dishonourable to God, to exert omnipotence continually for the preservation of his own work; or, that it is incompatible with his dignity and felicity thus to interpose in all the concerns of his creatures. Thus they confound the idea of *absolute perfection*, the incommunicable attribute of God, with that of *relative perfection* as bestowed by him on his creatures; and by false notions of dignity

and happiness, they represent the Creator as finite and imperfect, whilst they deify his works as independent and self-sufficient!

Such sophistry, however, is well calculated to lead men from thinking of their obligations and accountableness to the Creator; and to pacify their consciences in neglecting his worship and service, and manifesting, in their whole conduct, that they contemptuously disregard his authority, his favour, and his indignation: indeed they, who inwardly hate religion, may often find it convenient, to allow the existence of God, in order to escape reproach and elude conviction; and yet live as if there were no God.

But, if the mind were unbiassed by corrupt passions and prejudices, it would appear, that there is no rational ground for a moment's hesitation, in respect of the scriptural doctrine, that the great Creator upholds all things by his omnipotence, manages them in his wisdom and goodness, and governs them in justice, truth, and holiness; that "not a sparrow falls to "the ground without Him," that "even the hairs of "our head are all numbered," and that all second causes derive their origin, permanency, and efficacy from him alone.

The deviations from the ordinary course of nature, in those miraculous events which have been unanswerably attested; the surprising accomplishment of many explicit prophecies, through successive generations; the extraordinary deliverances, beyond all probability, which some persons have experienced; and the uniform answers, which pious christians receive to their prayers, will have a vast weight with the im-

partial enquirer, when seriously employed in considering this subject. The doctrine in question is established by every external and internal proof of the divine original of the scriptures, and cannot be denied without virtually rejecting them: and, even if they were wholly passed over in the argument, the contrary tenets might easily be shewn to be so irrational, and unphilosophical, that nothing but aversion to the perfections and government of God, could induce any reflecting person to espouse and adhere to them.

They, who thus far coincide with the author in opinion, will readily perceive that the great Creator, Benefactor, and Governor of the universe has *Rights*. Indeed, he only, has rights *essentially*, *originally*, and *unalienably;* and all the rights of creatures are derived from the powers which he hath given them, the relations to him and each other, which he hath constituted, and from his express appointments; and therefore they are dependent, and liable to be forfeited and lost. What these Rights of God are, I proceed to shew, by adducing some of them for a specimen: at the same time I would observe, that every Right of God implies correspondent duties, which his rational creatures are bound to perform, or are inexcuseable in neglecting.

PART I.

Containing the Rights of God, as the Creator, providential Benefactor, and moral Governor of the World.

WHETHER we contemplate the glorious perfections of the infinite and eternal God; or whether we consider what he hath done for his creatures, and continually bestows on them; we must be convinced that he hath an unalienable right to universal dominion, worship, love, and obedience; and that "His is the "kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever."—In particular—

I. The LORD hath a right to propose the display of his own glory, as his ultimate end, in all his works.* From eternity he was essentially glorious; but the perfections of his nature could only be manifested through the medium of creation; and be known, admired, and adored by those creatures, whom he was pleased to form capable of such contemplations and affections. If these continued obedient to the Creator, they could not but enjoy the most complete felicity, in beholding his glory, possessing his love, and celebrating his praises: but it was meet, that the first Cause of all things should propose his own glory, as

* Prov. xxvi. 4. Rom. xi. 36.

his principal end; and that the happiness of derived, dependent, and obedient creatures, should be only a subordinate end, inseparably connected with it. For it is an article in the creed of sound reason, as well as the doctrine of the Bible, that "all creatures are as "nothing" in comparison of the infinite Creator.* It is therefore most unreasonable to conclude, with many philosophers of high reputation, that the happiness of the creatures is the ultimate end of God, in all his dispensations; seeing the glory of his own name is an object of infinitely greater importance.

This indeed is concerned in rendering obedient creatures happy; but the reasonings of many on this subject principally relate to the happiness of *men*, who without exception, have rebelled against the authority of the great Creator. And surely it is most absurd to suppose, that the holy God prefers the happiness of *sinners* to his own glory; and that he will dishonour himself, and act contrary to his own perfections, rather than leave them to the just punishment and consequences of their crimes! For who would not count it most unreasonable, that the welfare of *criminals* should be considered as the great end of civil government, even in preference to the honour of the prince, and the security of his loyal subjects? It must, therefore, be manifest, that the Lord hath a right to prefer his own glory to the happiness of his creatures, when their disobedience hath introduced a competition between them.

---

* Isa. xl. 12, 17.

If this be admitted; it will also follow, that all rational creatures should recognize this right of God; and that they should propose to themselves the same end in all their works, and attempt nothing contrary to it by word or deed; otherwise they do not render him the glory due to his name.

II. From eternity God possessed an unalienable right to create what orders of beings he saw good, and to arrange them in the universe according to his own plan. Many discourse about the several creatures, which are known or supposed to exist, as if they comprehended the whole design and plan of the Creator. "But who hath known the mind of the LORD, or who "hath been his counsellor?"*—It would be a presumption unspeakably less reprehensible, for the most illiterate person on earth to find fault with the *apparatus* of an eminent philosopher, as unsuitable to his purpose; than for the most exalted of creatures to censure in the slightest degree any work of the only wise God,

Had not he seen good to form *us* rational creatures, *our* objections would have been precluded: and did he indeed give us existence, and endue us with understanding, that we might be capable of censuring his works? "Shall the thing formed say to his Creator, "Why hast thou made me thus?" Surely this must be as inconsistent with reason as with piety! And adoring gratitude, fervent praises, and humble acquiescence in the wisdom and will of God, must far bet-

* Isa. xl. 13, 14. Rom. xi. 34—36.

ter become *us*, who have received such benefits, and know so little of his eternal counsels, and the immensity of the creation!

III. The Lord hath a right to dispose of every part of the creation, as he pleases. He is the great Proprietor of the whole, and "is it not lawful for him to "do what he will with his own?" His sovereignty indeed is inseparable from his most perfect wisdom, justice, goodness, and truth: "He cannot deny him-"self," but "is righteous in all his ways, and holy "in all his works:" all objections, therefore, to the right of God thus to dispose of all his creatures, involve in them the impossible supposition of his making a wrong use of his power, and are manifestly erroneous and absurd, and border on blasphemy. He may do things, which appear to us to be wrong: but our judgment is not always according to truth and rectitude; nor are we infallible, or even impartial, in our decisions.

The divine sovereignty cannot resemble, in any degree, the arbitrary power, which men often exercise, with oppression and cruelty, under the influence of passion and caprice, and in egregious folly: on the contrary, it is unlimited authority, invariably exercised in the most perfect manner possible; and this must be advantageous in the highest degree to all creatures, except such as for their atrocious crimes are excluded from the common benefit.

It behoves us to say, "such knowledge is too won-"derful for us, we cannot attain unto it!"—We ought to adore the depths which we cannot fathom; and to conclude, that "though clouds and darkness

" are round about him; yet justice and judgment are " the basis of his throne." We act after this manner in respect of our fellow creatures: for when a man's general conduct is manifestly distinguished by prudence, integrity, and generosity; we give him credit in a particular action that has a contrary appearance, and suppose him to be influenced by motives with which we are unacquainted. How much more reasonable is it to proceed in this manner, when He is concerned, " whose judgments are unsearchable, and his " ways past finding out!"

But it is especially our duty to recognize the sovereign right of God, with reference to ourselves and all our concerns; and not to utter a word, or harbour a thought, that implies the least degree of dissatisfaction with his dealings, towards us, or any of his creatures. In particular, " The earth is the LORD's and the ful- " ness of it:" and " He hath given it to the children " of men," as it seemed good in his sight. The different proportions, in which its produce is distributed, result from an almost infinite variety of second causes, operating and combining their energy, through successive generations. But, though the good or bad conduct of every individual, and that of his predecessors or contemporaries, concur in assigning him his situation in the community, and dividing to him a more scanty or abundant provision: yet the Lord ought to be acknowledged as the first cause in the whole distribution. Talents, health, industry, and success, are his gifts: He permits, restrains, directs, counteracts, or prospers men's activity, as he sees good: he is the original Source of the difference in climates, soils, and

seasons. The Lord "maketh rich, and maketh poor; "he lifteth up and casteth down:" and the vast inequality which subsists in men's rank and station, must be resolved into his sovereign appointment, by all who consistently acknowledge his providence.

He hath wise and holy reasons for those dispensations, by which the wicked prosper; and the more inoffensive are impoverished and oppressed: as well as for famines, earthquakes, and pestilences, by which numbers suffer without any exact discrimination of character. We may indeed use proper means of averting such calamities: and thus restraints may be imposed on the selfishness of mankind; encouragement and protection may be given to honest industry and ingenuity; and an enlarged beneficence may prevent the miseries which spring from too great an inequality in men's circumstances: for, a moderate inequality is a common benefit, and even essential to a well-regulated community. But after all, the Lord has a right to defeat such endeavours, as far as he sees good: and he gives, and takes away, whatever means or instruments he employs.

We should, therefore, consider our condition as God's express appointment for us, acquiesce in his wisdom, justice, and goodness; accommodate ourselves to the duties of it as those that must give account, and use no unjustifiable means of changing it. We ought not to repine, or envy, when we see others more prosperous: we are not allowed to *covet* any thing belonging to another man: much less then may we attempt by violence, or fraud, or by disturbing the publick tranquillity, to seize on those possessions,

which the great Proprietor of the world hath seen good to bestow on others.

IV. The Lord hath a right to exercise dominion over all his creatures, and to be the Lawgiver and Judge of all rational agents. He governs the inanimate and irrational creation, by that constitution of their powers and properties, their order and relation to each other, and that connexion of causes and effects, which are called "the laws of nature." But beings endued with the capacity of reflection, of knowing their Maker's will, and of obeying or disobeying it, require another kind of government, and are properly considered as accountable for their actions. It is then reasonable to suppose, that they would have rules prescribed to them for their conduct; and that the consequences of observing, or neglecting them would be set before them; that they might perform their part in the universe, not by external coercion, or an instinct which could admit of no deviation; but from rational motives, and a voluntary choice.

Infinite wisdom, however, was absolutely necessary to form such rules, or laws as *perfectly* suited the capacities and situations of those, who were to be governed by them: the authority of God alone could give them adequate validity, and demand absolute obedience from every individual: and his omnipotence, omniscience, and perfect justice, truth, and goodness were requisite, in order to the distribution of rewards and punishments, in a manner which none could resist, elude, or blame.

It might be expected, that many things in the divine law and government, though perfectly wise, just,

and good, would appear to us in another light, both as we are short-sighted creatures, and as we are sinners. We are utterly incompetent to determine what becomes the infinite God, in the government of his universal and everlasting kingdom; or what his own glory, and the best interests of the creation, may require. We might reasonably suppose, that holy creatures, who were made acquainted with our state and character, would expect, that God's laws must appear to us too strict and spiritual, his denunciations too dreadful, and his judgments extremely severe. Self-love alone suffices in this case to warp the judgment: those vicious affections which prompt us to disobey the holy precept, will dispose us to desire impunity in transgression; and to prefer our own indulgence and security to the honour of God and the good of the universe: and he, who is unacquainted with the influence of our *desires* upon our *reasonings* and *conclusions*, where we ourselves are concerned, has not so much as begun to understand the history of the human species, or to know his own heart.

What legislator consults the dishonest part of the community, however sagacious, about repealing or altering the laws, and regulating the administration of justice? The objections of criminals to the strictness of the laws, and the severe vigilance of the magistrates, are deemed their best encomium; and it scarcely admits a doubt, but that holy creatures consider the objections of sinners to the laws and government of God, in exactly the same light.

We, perhaps, over-rate the inhabitants of our earth, in comparison with the whole intelligent creation,

through eternal ages: for it is probable, that the numbers immured in prison, or put to death, under the best regulated human governments, bear as large a proportion to the whole nation, as men, and fallen angels too, bear to all the rational creatures, which have been, or shall be, brought into existence. Yet the exemption from *deserved* punishment, of comparatively a small part of the community, is not thought an object worthy to be put in competition with the publick welfare.

All the laws of God, contained in the scriptures, are wise and righteous, and suited to the purposes for which they were given: and those which were intended for mankind in general are most equitable in their nature, and beneficial in their tendency. As the Lord himself is the Perfection and Source of all beauty and excellency; and as he is the Author of our existence, and the bountiful Giver of all that we enjoy or hope for: so it is most reasonable, that we should love him with our whole hearts, and serve him with all our powers, and in the use of all his gifts. He must have an undeniable right to demand all this of us; and we must be guilty of injustice, as well as ingratitude, if we do not thus love and serve him. We ought supremely to admire and love all his glorious excellencies; to reverence his majesty and authority; to desire and delight in his favour above all things; to receive all his benefits with most lively gratitude; to devote ourselves wholly to his service; and to make his glory the great end of all our actions. Who can reasonably find fault with one article in this compendium of the first table of the law? who can urge a single ob-

jection to it, without pleading in behalf of some degree of ingratitude, of aversion to infinite excellency, or disaffection to the authority of consummate wisdom, justice, truth, and love?

The substance of the second table is equally consonant to the decisions of sober reason; as we must perceive, if we could but divest ourselves of the bias which results from our inordinate self-love. The happiness of any other of our species is, in itself, as important as our own: it is therefore reasonable, that we should "love our neighbour as ourselves;" and that we should judge and act, in all the various concerns and relations of life, with an undeviating regard to this equitable rule. This would produce an habitual attention to the life, health, reputation, liberty, ease, peace, domestick comfort, and purity, of every other person, similar to that with which wise and rational self-love would desire that they should regard our's. We should never, in this case, pursue our own interest, or indulge our own passions, to the injury of any other person: we should recede from our own advantages, and thwart our own inclinations, whenever we could thus promote the greater good of any man, though a perfect stranger, or an injurious adversary: and we should uniformly practise perfect equity, sincerity, fidelity, candour, kindness, and forgiveness; and connect universal philanthropy with the unfailing performance of every relative duty. If all men acted in this manner: fraud, slander, malice, envy, discord, wars, seditions, massacres, oppressions, slavery, licentiousness, and the long train of dire evils, which waste and harrass the human species, would be final-

ly terminated; and earth would resemble heaven in felicity as well as purity: for, all confusion and misery spring from the transgression of the law, and its inseparable consequences.

If we could not so clearly discern the excellency of the divine law, it would nevertheless be reasonable for us to acknowledge the right of the great Lawgiver, and to submit to his authority as Judge of the world. But when it is demonstrable, that his "law is holy, just, and good," and calculated to make all his obedient subjects completely happy; they must be left without excuse, who not only break his commandments, but speak and act as if he had no right to command, or as if they were under no obligations to obey.

When we seriously reflect upon the miseries which have arisen from transgression, in every part of the creation which it hath pervaded; as well as on the rebellion, contempt, ingratitude, and enmity against God, which are contained in every wilful sin; can we confidently say, that we are capable of determining what degree or duration of punishment it deserves? Shall we not rather keep silence on a subject, in which we are too deeply interested to be impartial, and too short-sighted to be competent judges? Surely it is more reasonable to leave this matter to the decision of infinite wisdom and justice, to submit to the award of our Creator, and to betake ourselves to his mercy, as our only refuge from his righteous indignation! This must be one of the RIGHTS OF GOD, and of our duties: and perhaps human folly, impiety, and presumption have seldom appeared more complicated,

than when sinners argue that he will not fulfil his threatenings, because they venture to assert, that it would be contrary to his justice and goodness so to do! and when, encouraged by this groundless hope of impunity, they continue to neglect his great salvation, and to add to the number of their crimes! "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou "find out the Almighty to perfection? It is higher "than heaven, what canst thou do? It is deeper than "hell, what canst thou know!" "But to man he saith, "behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and "to depart from evil is understanding."*

V. The Lord hath a right to appoint the ordinances of his own worship, and all things relative to the prayers, praises, and thanksgivings of his rational creatures. This implies, that he hath a right to the adorations of all those whom he hath formed capable of this reasonable service, and that they rob him of his due who do not worship him; whether they give his glory to those, "who by nature are no gods;" or whether they be wholly irreligious. But he alone can perfectly know in what manner it best becomes his creatures to worship him.

Every thing, therefore, essentially connected with our religious worship, should be regulated according to the revealed will of God: who no doubt has a right to the use of all our time, abilities and possessions, which should, in one way or other, be employed in his service and devoted to his glory; and, consequent-

* Job xi. 7, 8. xxviii. 28.

ly, he may require us to appropriate to religious duties whatever part of them he pleases.

The institution of the sabbath, or of one day in seven, to be kept wholly to the Lord, may be adduced as an instance, on this part of our subject. The mention of the day of sacred rest immediately after the account of man's creation; the attention to it, which was required of Israel, previous to the giving of the law,* and the form of the fourth commandment, "*Remember* that thou keep holy the seventh day," concur in proving the appointment to have been coeval with the human race; and this is further confirmed by the general custom, in many parts of the world, from the beginning, of computing time by weeks, which cannot be so well accounted for in any other way, as by concluding that it was the effect of tradition, derived from Adam and Noah, and retained when the reason of it was forgotten.

The circumstances of mankind have been greatly altered, since our first parents were created *very good;* and the Lord hath dealt with his church according to different dispensations: yet the same proportion of consecrated time hath invariably been adhered to. For, Jesus Christ, "the Lord of the sabbath day," hath manifestly established its obligation on his disciples: as his allowance of works of piety, mercy, and real necessity, implies a full confirmation of the prohibitions contained in the law, of all other kinds of labour. But the example and writings of his apostles prove, that, by his authority, the first day of the week,

---

* Ex. xvi, 5, 22, 30.

(on which he arose from the dead,) was set apart instead of the seventh; though the change was silently and gradually made, that the prejudices of the Jews might not be needlessly excited. On this day "the "Lord of the sabbath," after his resurrection, repeatedly met his disciples, and spake peace to them: on this day the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them, subsequent to his ascension: they were afterwards accustomed on it, to meet together to break bread, to preach and hear the gospel, to collect or dispense their alms, and for other religious purposes: and the custom of the christian church from the primitive times sufficiently proves the observance of it to be an essential part of our holy religion. It is also emphatically called "the Lord's Day,"* or the day of Christ, the Lord of the sabbath, which he claims as his own, and requires his disciples to dedicate to religious services, as far as they have the opportunity and power so to do.

The strict observance of his holy day, by suspending all kinds of labour (except such as have been mentioned;) by avoiding all worldly pleasures and avocations; by employing it in the devotions of the closet, the family, and the publick congregation; in the pious instruction of children and servants, and in religious meditation and conversation; forms a badge of distinction, a bond of union, and a means of communion with each other, among true christians; it tends greatly to promote the glory of God, and it provides in the most important manner for the propaga-

* Rev. i. 10.

tion of real christianity, and the edification of the church. Indeed such an institution seems to be indispensably necessary to the maintenance of pure religion among men; the strictest regard to it does not in the least interfere with the advantageous management of agriculture, manufactures, or commerce; whilst it exceedingly subserves the interests of civilization, morality, and genuine liberty, political and personal. Whereas the profanation of this returning season of sacred rest, proportionably tends to the increase of impiety, profligacy, and every kind of vice.

It would probably be found, upon a careful scrutiny, that the progress of irreligion and wickedness, in this land, hath kept pace with the neglect and contempt with which the Lord's day hath more and more been treated: and that no great regard is paid to equity, truth, or good morals, (except as reputation, interest, or fashion are concerned,) by those numbers of every rank, who, in different ways, profane this consecrated time, by spending it in business, journeying, feasting, polite dissipation, or gross excesses, as their habits and inclinations lead them.

Some indeed argue, that as we ought to keep every day holy, so we need not distinguish the Lord's day from the rest of the week: but what is this more than a mere play of words, employed to justify disobedience to God, and dislike to religious duties? Six days of the week may be spent in a holy manner; by a conscientious attention to the employments of our several stations in the community; by regulating all our undertakings and enjoyments in justice, temperance, truth, and love; and being careful that they be sancti-

fied by the word of God, and prayer. But obedience to one divine command cannot authorize disobedience to another. The Lord's day is set apart and consecrated by his authority to the great concerns of religious worship: it is therefore profaned by those actions, which on other days are a part of a man's duty: because being done at an improper season, they rob God of his due, and violate his command. Through the imperfection of language, the same word often conveys different ideas according to its connexion: and thus the term *holy* signifies consecration to God, and his immediate worship, when used concerning the sabbath; but it signifies conformity to any of his precepts, or to his image in justice, purity, truth, and goodness, when used in respect of our general conduct. Indeed they, who argue in this manner, may deal honestly, and be decent in their lives, from inferior motives: but they keep none of their days *holy*, that is, in obedience to God, from a regard to his authority, love to his name, delight in his service, and zeal for his glory; and they only want a pretence for neglecting religion and following their beloved worldly pursuits, as entirely on the Lord's day, as they do on other days, but in rather a different manner.

Whilst a remnant continue to hallow the day of God, "not doing their own works, nor seeking their "own pleasure," during that sacred time, but counting it honourable and delightful thus to anticipate the worship and rest of heaven; it will constitute such a testimony for God and religion in the midst of the land, as may encourage a hope, that our iniquity is not yet full. But when there shall be only a few ex-

ceptions to the too general example already set, not only by the lower orders, but by legislators, magistrates, and other honourable, nay, *sacred*, characters among us, of making the Lord's day a season for business, recreation, sloth, or indulgence; then it may be apprehended, we shall be ripe for national judgments. For if God hath a right to appoint what proportion of our time shall be sanctified; if he hath reserved this day for himself; and if we, as a nation, professing to be his people, unite in refusing to comply with his appointment; what can we expect, but to be given up to our own delusions; till we become monuments of his awful vengeance?

It may be proper, under this head, to mention publick worship more particularly; as the indolence of the carnal mind and its aversion to religion, have lately been soothed by an attempt to prove that it is no part of a christian's duty. It has been here taken for granted, or rather inferred from the scriptures that relate to the hallowing of the Lord's day, that one design of the institution is, to give all men, (as far as it is regarded,) leisure to attend on publick worship and the preaching of the gospel. Many are able to avail themselves of such opportunities at other times; and it is a good thing to be so employed, when not prevented by duties of another kind. But if the Lord's day were duly sanctified, all who had health, might, at some times, have these advantages. Private devotion is indeed absolutely requisite to maintain the life of piety in the soul, and ought to be constantly practised: but publick religion peculiarly honours God, and keeps up the remembrance of his authority, perfec-

tions, and works, and of our relations and obligations to him: it is the grand means of diffusing piety more widely; it constitutes that tribute of adoration and gratitude, which the Lord requires of us, in the presence of our fellow-creatures: and as we are social beings susceptible of sympathy, so the view of numbers apparently animated with devout affections, has a powerful tendency to excite and invigorate them in our own hearts, and the example of esteemed characters has extensive good effects: whilst what passes in publick worship gives the judicious parent, or head of a family, the occasion and subject of instructing his household also.

In every way, therefore, the assembling of ourselves together, to hear the word of God, and to unite in adoring his glorious name, is necessary to the existence of true piety in the world: and were this entirely laid aside, (as it is at present to an alarming degree,) we might confidently prognosticate the universal prevalence of ignorance, impiety, infidelity, and vice.

Publick worship, in one form or other, has undeniably constituted a part of true religion, in every age; and surely all serious and impartial persons will allow it to be reasonable that our great Creator and Benefactor should require us openly to adore his name, thank him for his goodness, and avow our entire dependence on him in all things, and that we should delight in meeting together for these important ends. They, therefore, who refuse to join statedly with his congregations, in rendering him the tribute which he justly claims; and they who draw nigh to him with

their lips, when their hearts are far from him, are alike guilty of robbing him of the glory due unto him.

VI. The Sovereign of the universe hath a right to appoint his own vicegerents. He uses two principal means in governing mankind. His spiritual law has authority over the conscience, and takes cognizance of the thoughts and intentions of the heart, and numbers of those actions, which human laws cannot reach; and its sanctions chiefly relate to the future and eternal world: but civil government and human laws, have authority over the outward conduct, in those things that relate to the welfare of society; and their sanctions are wholly of a temporal kind.

Whether we study the book of reason, or that of revelation, we must allow that civil government is the ordinance of God, for the punishment of evil doers, and the protection and praise of those that do well: and when we duly reflect how he accomplishes his purposes by instruments and second causes, as well as by an immediate interposition, we shall perceive, that the existing government, and the persons actually established in authority in any country, are as really appointed by him, as they were in Israel, when Moses, Joshua, or Samuel, were the rulers, or when the kingdom was conferred on David and his family. The manner in which the choice is notified differs, but the same great Sovereign still selects his own vicegerents.

An inconceivable variety of circumstances and events have concurred, through many generations, in bringing every man to his particular situation in the community, antecedent to his own choice and con-

duct. Thus some find themselves called to govern, and are invested with authority; not through their own usurpation or circumvention, but in the regular course of human affairs, which cannot be altered without violent convulsions: and unless the state of things be very bad, such changes rarely conduce to the common benefit. But if we also remember that the Lord directs and determines all these contingencies; we shall readily perceive that rulers, in every settled form of government, (however it were at first established,) are appointed by him, and accountable to him.

It is indeed allowable and proper, by equitable precautions, to restrain men from abusing authority, on the same principle by which we obviate the danger of a famine or a pestilence: and when such prudent limitations become a part of the established form of government, they are to be considered as "the ordi-" nance of God," equally with the other constitutions to which they are united. But in all ordinary cases at least, we are bound to submit to *his* authority, by obeying magistrates for his sake; and to honour *him*, by shewing *them* all civil respect according to his word. This will become easy and pleasant to us, in proportion to the degree in which we reverence, love, and adore him, as our Sovereign Lord and most liberal Benefactor, to whom we are bound by every obligation, to be obedient and submissive in all things.

The same reasoning is equally conclusive, in respect of all the other subordinations in society, in domestick life, and in the church of God. Superiors, seniors, parents, husbands, masters, persons of emi-

nent wisdom and piety, and faithful ministers, are entrusted with different proportions of the Lord's authority: *He* is obeyed, and honoured, when a scriptural deference, submission, and respect are rendered to *them;* the contrary conduct, in the inferior relation, is rebellion against both his providence and his commandment: and those speculations which militate against this regular subordination, tend directly to "confusion and every evil work."

VII. The Lord hath a right to superintend, alter, or suspend, as he sees good, those 'laws of nature,' which arise from the general operations of second causes. Many frivolous objections have been made to the scriptural doctrine of Providence, and of the efficacy of prayer, in such things as depend on an established, and supposed inviolable, connexion of causes and effects. But is it not most *unreasonable* to consider this general course of things as *necessary* and *immutable?* No doubt the Creator communicated and continues to every part of his work, its peculiar powers, properties, and situation in the system; and superintends the whole with infinite wisdom and omnipotent energy.

No miracle is required, in order to determine the efficacy of second causes, in any particular manner, according to the wants and prayers of pious persons. It is not commonly thought to be any deviation from the general laws of nature, when one region is fertilized by moderate showers, another wasted with inundations, and a third visited with drought: yet will any rational man pretend, that such events are not appointed and effected by the sovereign will and power.

ful operation of God himself? The same holds equally good, in respect of earthquakes, pestilential diseases, hurricanes, and volcanoes; and even those events which may seem to be of less importance, are regulated by the divine superintendency, in entire consistency with the laws of nature. Medicines are effectual, or unavailing; abundant increase rewards the husbandman's toil, or his crop and hopes are blasted together: and ten thousand similar cases occur, on which life or death, prosperity or adversity, comforts or corrections, deliverances or judgments, entirely depend; yet in none of them can we either perceive any miraculous interposition, or reasonably refuse to resolve them into the sovereign appointment and powerful operation of the Almighty.

Many bold objections have also been urged against the credibility of some events, recorded in scripture, because they cannot be accounted for, in consistency with these idolized laws of nature: whereas they are evidently mentioned, as miraculous deviations from that settled course, effected by omnipotence, for the most important purposes. "Why then should it be "deemed incredible, that God should raise the dead?" or why should we question his power to deluge the whole earth? He, who gave to matter those inexplicable powers, that we call *attraction* and *gravitation*, by which the whole mass of water is supposed to be retained in the ocean; could suspend them, in what measure he saw good, when he determined thus to execute vengeance on a rebellious race. I do not say, that the deluge was effected in this way: but the hint may shew that he can with infinite ease do those

things, which proud men have asserted to be impossible. The same may be said, concerning any other miracle recorded in scripture; for, unless the fact attested involves an undeniable contradiction, its contrariety to the known laws of nature only proves, that the interposition of the God of nature was requisite to effect it; which cannot at all invalidate its credibility, when properly authenticated, and when the end proposed was worthy of such an interference.

Perhaps some readers may think, that what I am about to add, might have been spared: but whatever serves as a pretext for disregarding the scriptures, constitutes a poison congenial to our nature, and suited to our vitiated taste: and it is not amiss sometimes to shew the absurdity of the most able men, when they reject the oracles of God. In an age, therefore, in which sceptical objections of every kind, are widely circulated in numerous pamphlets, retailed in almost all companies, and greedily imbibed by the inexperienced of every rank, I trust I shall at least be excused for introducing such a subject.

Some scepticks have gone so far as to affirm, that miracles, instead of proving doctrines to be from God, are themselves absolutely incredible on any evidence whatsoever! Perhaps the ignorant presumption of man never yet produced any thing more extraordinary than this assertion. For in what part of the book of nature, or of reason, is it written in legible characters, that the great Creator cannot, or will not, make any alteration in the established course of nature? The argument they adduce is briefly this: most men never saw miracles performed; therefore, those per-

sons, that say they have seen them, are not to be credited, however unexceptionable their testimony in other respects may be. By such a mode of reasoning we may prove, that there is no such country as China, and no such city as Constantinople; or that there never existed such a sceptick as Mr. Hume; for the most of men never saw them. To argue thus, in these instances, would only prove a man's folly. What then does it prove in the other case? It is indeed pretended, that miracles are contrary to *universal* experience and observation: but this can mean no more than the universal experience and observation of all those, who never experienced and observed them. Thus the congelation of water into a solid mass of ice is contrary to the universal observation of all those inhabitants of Africa, who never witnessed such a transmutation: and accordingly some of them, (with a wisdom and modesty similar to those of European scepticks,) have declared, that the persons, who attested the congelation of lakes, rivers, and seas in northern countries, were unworthy of the least credence.

Such ridiculous objections to scripture would never have been thought of, or published, nor could they ever have imposed on any reasonable being: if a secret aversion to revealed religion did not predispose the heart to entertain them favourably. In reality, miracles are extraordinary events, that have been often counterfeited, (which evinces that some are real;) and, therefore, they require to be authenticated by clear and indisputable testimony: when this is done, they are equally credible with other past transactions, or with any other facts: for, many things, which have no

immediate connexion with religion, (though sufficiently attested,) can no more be satisfactorily accounted for, than the miraculous events recorded in scripture.

Having shewn, that God has an undoubted right to superintend, alter, or suspend the operation of second causes: it must be added, that it is our duty to consider them as altogether under his direction; to be thankful for, or submit to, all the effects of them without exception, as his sovereign appointment; and to receive as the testimony of God every part of that revelation, which has been authenticated by miracles, and other incontestable proofs. For,

VIII. It must be allowed that the Lord hath a right to reveal himself, and his truth or will, to his rational creatures whenever he pleases, and in his own manner. The creation, and the ordinary course of providence contain a revelation of God, and we might thence learn a great deal concerning his perfections, and our obligations to him, if we were duly attentive and teachable. But it may be proper for us to know more of his incomprehensible nature, and of those things that relate to his moral government, than could be discovered through this medium. To superior intelligences the Lord may perhaps reveal himself immediately, and they may intuitively apprehend his instructions: but he does not teach us in that manner. Yet it is exceedingly desirable that we should be more fully acquainted with him and his will concerning us; and it might reasonably be expected that he would instruct us by revelation; if he intended to shew us

any favour, or accept any worship or obedience at our hands.

But in case the Lord saw good to communicate instruction to mankind, through the intervention of select persons, to whom he imparted the message they were to deliver in his name; it must be reasonable to suppose they would be enabled to authenticate their mission in a decisive manner. Indeed the internal evidence of revelation, its coincidence with the state of mankind, and its excellent nature and tendency, constitute one grand demonstration of its divinity: but much reflection, and some experience, are requisite to enable a man to perceive the full force of this argument. In order, therefore, to arrest the attention of a careless or prejudiced world, to new discoveries of God and heavenly things; evident miracles, which could not be counterfeited, or effected but by omnipotence, openly performed in the presence of opposers, and challenging the fullest investigation, formed a proper attestation to the messengers of God: and the evident accomplishment of prophecies, contained in the records of this revelation, when connected with other evidence, is *now* a suitable means of drawing men's attention to the written word, and to the instructions of those who appeal to it as their authority.

The Lord hath also a right to demand our entire credence, confidence, and obedience, in respect of his authenticated revelation. It is our duty, with diligent care and seriousness, according to our opportunity and ability, to examine the grounds on which it claims our attention as the word of God, and to seek after a

more complete acquaintance with every part of its contents: by which means our assurance of its divinity will increase continually, if we prosecute the study, in a teachable, humble, and obedient spirit. But it should also be remembered, that we are bound *implicitly* to believe "the testimony of God, (which is sure "and giveth wisdom to the simple,") in decided preference to our own preconceived opinions and reasonings, and to the decisions of the most renowned and admired philosophers. The Lord has a right to demand such unreserved credit from all his rational creatures, whenever he speaks to them: nor does the mysteriousness of his instruction form any ground of exception; for they who worship an incomprehensible God, must have a mysterious religion. But mystery is very distinct from absurdity, or self-contradiction: and a doctrine is not *unreasonable*, because it is above the reach of our limited powers; if it be not plainly contrary to any of those truths, which we *know certainly* by *intuition* or *demonstration*.

The *external* evidence of revelation resolves itself wholly into the proof afforded us, that certain events actually took place, in time and manner, as recorded in the Scriptures. If the facts be established by sufficient testimony; the doctrines connected with them are proved to be "the word of God," and must not be treated as disputable opinions, like the sentiments of human authors: on the contrary, they should be received with reverent and humble submission of the understanding, as divine and infallible instructions. What then can be more unreasonable, than for men to demand *demonstrative* proof of the doctrines of the

revelation? If the facts be properly authenticated, the doctrines are evinced to be the dictates of infinite wisdom and truth, which is the highest possible demonstration. But *testimony* is the only *direct* way of proving facts, to those who were not present when they took place; and it would not be deemed more absurd for a student to attempt the proof of a geometrical problem by testimony, than for a judge to try causes by mathematical deductions. The application of any kind of reasoning or evidence to those things, to which it is in its own nature inapplicable, has often been exposed in other matters, as ridiculous in the extreme: but it can never be more absurd, and must always be less mischievous, than when it is introduced into religious enquiries. Yet this is frequently done by men, who are considered as the greatest masters of reasoning; and who speak of those, that deem it rational implicitly to believe the testimony of God, as weak and deluded people. But I shall close this part of my subject, by observing, that, till all the internal and external evidences of the divine original of the scriptures be solidly and completely answered, it is most unreasonable and exceedingly unfair, to start objections against particular facts or doctrines contained in them; as they must be truth, if the book that contains them be the word of God: yet this is the grand weapon of modern scepticism and infidelity; and it is doubtless well suited to the purpose of those, who would unsettle the unwary, and impose upon the indolent and ignorant, by infusing prejudices into their minds against the holy religion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

PART II.

The Rights of God, in respect of his dealings with sinful creatures.

AN attentive and impartial consideration of what hath been advanced, concerning the rights of God, as our Creator, Benefactor, and Governor, must convince us, that we have withheld from him that worship, gratitude, love, and obedience, which were justly his due. Whether we review our own conduct, and inspect the state of our hearts; or whether we study the history of our species, and observe the course of the world around us; we shall be compelled to acknowledge, that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." If we therefore argue concerning the divine government, according to the regulations established in human society; we must conclude from reason, as well as from revelation, that "by the works of the law shall "no flesh be justified in the sight of God." For by what law of man can that person be justified, who hath in one instance wilfully broken it? The prince may indeed pardon the transgressor; but the law can do no other than condemn him. Alleviating circumstances, or obedience in other instances, may be inducements to clemency; but the law respects simply the question, 'Has he transgressed, or has he not?' If a man is found guilty, the sentence must be condemnation; and,

unless mercy intervene, the appointed penalty must be inflicted; nay, indeed, every exercise of mercy, to those who merit punishment, is a relaxation of justice, and weakens the authority of the administration.

We have already shewn, that God has a right to determine what punishment shall be inflicted on his rebellious subjects; as indeed he only is competent to estimate the desert of every transgressor: and the more we investigate the matter with seriousness and impartiality, the less we shall be disposed to object against the solemn language of scripture on this alarming subject.

If it had been possible for us to have reasoned *a priori* on the event of our situation in this world; we should probably have concluded that the Lord would not have inflicted the sentence of temporal death, with so many humiliating and agonizing circumstances, on the whole human race without exception: but undeniable facts exclude such vain reasonings, or bold conjectures; and the bodies of all men return to their original dust, though they are only the instruments by which the soul accomplishes its sinful purposes. How then can we know, or from what premises can we conclude, that the Lord will not inflict the penalty of final misery upon the soul, the great agent in rebellion? All our conclusions, from what we think right, to what infinite wisdom will do, must be inconclusive, if not presumptuous. Our reason, if not instructed by revelation, can in this point afford us no certain intelligence; and conjecture must involve terror, in proportion as we know God and our obligations to him. His sure testimony, therefore, alone can give us any infor-

mation, on which we may safely depend; and that invariably declares, that the everlasting misery of body and soul in hell, will be the righteous punishment of the wicked in another world.

But "vain man would be wise:" and some may perhaps imagine, that the Omnipotent God would have done better, had he prevented the entrance of sin, and the necessity of punishment: or, in other words, they may object to the right of God to permit his creatures to sin, and then to punish them for their crimes. Such insinuations, (for men do not generally speak out on this subject,) involve the most awful blasphemy; and the apostle hath already given the proper answer; "Nay, but O man, who art thou, that "repliest against God? shall the thing formed say to "him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" We may, however, also remind the objector, that the wisdom of God is infinite, as well as his power. Omnipotence could have prevented the entrance of evil; or at once have annihilated it when it began to exist: but facts prove that the Lord did not judge this consistent with his designs, of ordering all things in subserviency to the display of his own glorious perfections: and, indeed, we may perceive, that an omnipotent exclusion of sin and misery could never have consisted with the exercise of dominion over rational agents. The idea indeed implies a denial of his right to govern the world: for if it be incumbent on him to exert his power, in restraining every rational creature from evil, all commands, sanctions, and accountableness must become a nullity. We may also discern, even in our present state of comparative darkness, that

if sin had never entered, the infinite holiness of the divine nature, and the perfect justice of the divine government, could not have been so fully manifested as they now are; whilst the pardoning mercy and love to sinners, which the Lord exhibits by the gospel, as his peculiar riches and glory, could never have been known, imagined, or adored, by any of his creatures.

Much more might be adduced on this head, with reference to the Person and redemption of Christ: but it does not behove us to dwell on such a mysterious subject; for indeed all our thoughts and reasonings are, as it were, swallowed up in it. But then, it is a mystery, which equally belongs to every system of religion: for it is an undeniable fact, that God hath permitted sin and misery to invade the creation: he could have prevented their entrance, and we should *a priori* have concluded that he would. We must therefore allow, that this permission of evil consists with the divine perfections, or be forced to take refuge in atheism: unless we prefer the Manichean absurdity of two independent beings, one good and the other evil, engaged in perpetual hostility against each other. It is vain, therefore, on this ground, to object to revelation, or to any particular doctrines contained in it; for the mind must be pressed with the same difficulty, from undeniable facts, whether it acquiesce in the scriptural account of this subject, or look for satisfaction some other way. But, as we are not warranted to go a step beyond the scripture on this incomprehensible subject, I shall digress no further; but proceed to specify some of the RIGHTS OF GOD, in

respect of those creatures, which have sinned, and merited punishment, whether in this world, or in the next.

I. The Lord hath a right to execute deserved vengeance on guilty nations, or individuals, by whatever means and instruments he sees good.

Having denounced the sentence on fallen man, "Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return;" he executes it, through successive generations, on persons of every rank, age, character, and description, by a variety of wasting and painful diseases: but, as we are accustomed to this procedure, we express little surprise; nor is it generally objected to as unjust, because it is undeniable fact, and second causes are more noticed in it than the appointment of God. Yet infants, women, and the most inoffensive persons, are thus cut off, without any discrimination; and they frequently endure far sharper and more lingering agonies, than those which accompany most kinds of violent death. Sometimes the Lord employs famines, earthquakes, pestilences, and hurricanes, to execute his righteous decrees, and these events excite more astonishment: but men do not in general doubt of his right to deal thus with his creatures. And when nations are desolated by civil contests, massacres, or cruel oppressions; or by hostile invasions and destructive wars, in the ordinary course of human affairs; the wickedness of the executioners sometimes fixes the attention of multitudes; whilst the justice of God, who works by them, is either overlooked or tacitly acknowledged.

But on one grand occasion, in order to shew his abhorrence of iniquity, and to display the justice of his providential government, it pleased God to commission Israel to inflict his vengeance on the Amalekites, Canaanites, and other devoted nations, by military execution: and though he sealed the commission of his people by most signal miracles, and took effectual care that their conduct should not, in any ordinary circumstances, be pleaded as a precedent; yet the dispensation has been most vehemently exclaimed against, as if it were so contrary to essential justice and goodness, that no evidence could suffice to prove those persons to be sent by God, who executed such orders, or gave a sanction to them!

If, however, it consist with the divine perfections, to terminate, with much suffering, the lives of men, women, and children indiscriminately, by fevers, pestilences, famines, or earthquakes; and if many thousands every day are put to death by one means or other: what injustice could there be in the Lord's commanding his people to execute a similar sentence on guilty nations, by the sword of war? If they deserved death, it could not be unjust to cut them off in this, or any other, manner: and if it could be shewn to be an act of injustice to destroy them at all, the pains and fatal effects of a pestilence would have been equally liable to exception. Will any reasonable man dare to affirm explicitly, that the Lord had no right to order such an execution? Such an affirmation would involve the most complicated blasphemy against every part of God's providential dealings with our race: yet if it be allowed that he had this right; it must follow,

that he had also a right to appoint the executioners; his express command fully authorized whatever was done in obedience to it; and the humanity, required in other cases, would at least have been as criminal in the Israelites, as it is when exercised in sheltering a wilful murderer from justice.

Had they cut off vast multitudes with undistinguishing slaughter, to gratify their own ambition, avarice, cruelty, or revenge; their conduct would have been most atrocious: or if they had *imagined* that such sacrifices would be pleasing to God, though he had never required them; no man that duly reverences the scripture, would have attempted to justify or even excuse them. One of these must be the case with all, who in succeeding ages, and in ordinary circumstances, have pretended to copy their example. But the same records, that inform us of the fact, contain also the Lord's express commission, ratified by the most undeniable and multiplied miracles; the authenticity of these books is evinced by the most unanswerable arguments; and the fulfilment of prophecies contained in them, (especially in the present state of the Jews, as connected with the coming of Christ, and the establishment of his religion,) concurs with many other infallible arguments to prove, that "holy men "of God, spake and wrote in them as they were "moved by the Holy Ghost." Thus the conduct of Israel is fully justified: for He, who gave us our lives, which we have forfeited by sin, has a right to take them away, in that manner which he sees most conducive to the display of his own glory.

The shedding of human blood becomes an act of publick justice, yea, a required sacrifice to the honour of the divine command, when it is the blood of a wilful murderer: and in like manner those actions, which would be unjust, cruel, and horrid, if done by men to gratify their own passions, become acceptable and holy services when done in obedience to God. For *we* have no right to take away the life of our neighbour, or in any way to injure him, even though he deserves death: but God has a right to punish every transgressor; "to him vengeance belongeth;" he commissions whom he pleases to inflict it: in ordinary circumstances the civil magistrate is the authorized "minister of God; a revenger to execute wrath upon "evil doers:" and he was pleased to appoint the Israelites to a similar office, in respect of the Canaanites, with an extraordinary commission, sealed and ratified by his own miraculous interposition in their behalf.

As, therefore, the sheriff, that should permit the murderer to escape, whose execution had been entrusted to him, would be very criminal; nor would the plea of compassion and humanity exculpate him, for thus obstructing the course of publick justice, and violating the duty of his office; so the Israelites were not culpable for putting the Canaanites to death, without mercy, but for sparing from selfish motives those whom God had devoted to destruction, in disobedience to his express command.

The objections, therefore, which have on this ground been made to the history of the Old Testament, are irrational, as well as presumptuous. But

the instances before us are too instructive to be dismissed, without making some practical deductions from them. They were doubtless intended to stand upon record, as an affecting exhibition of the awful justice of God, and the odious nature and terrible effects of sin; and to lead men to consider his powerful indignation as the real cause of all the calamities, which fill the earth in more ordinary circumstances. We should *a priori* have thought, that the Lord would never give orders for such terrible executions: yet it is an authenticated fact that he did; and that he sharply rebuked and punished those, who failed in obeying them; as if they would pretend to be more merciful than He. Hence we learn that we are not competent to determine, what it becomes Him to do; and that he will deal far more severely with the wicked in another world, than our proud, ignorant, and partial reasonings would lead us to suppose. And if these considerations have any influence in warning us to flee from the wrath to come; in exciting us to value, and seek for the salvation of the gospel; and in teaching us to repent of, hate, forsake, and watch against every sin: we shall then "have a witness in ourselves," that there was abundant goodness and mercy connected with the Lord's righteous severity towards the devoted nations.

II. The Lord has a right to shew mercy on whom he will, and to leave as many as he pleases under merited condemnation; without assigning any reason for his conduct. Mercy to criminals, who deserve vengeance, cannot be a *debt* which justice requires to be paid; but it must be a favour, which may either

be conferred or withheld, according to the good pleasure of our offended Sovereign: and yet it must either be asserted, that he is bound to pardon sinners indiscriminately, at least all of certain descriptions; and would deny them justice if he did not: or allowed, that he has a sovereign right "to have mercy on "whom he will have mercy," and to leave all the rest to the consequences and punishment of their crimes.

Indeed, having revealed a way in which he is pleased to pardon and bless sinners, his declarations and engagements have rendered it indispensably necessary, for the honour of his name, that he should save all who come according to his appointment. But this whole design is the result of the richest love and mercy: and if it be found that some further interposition is absolutely requisite, previous to any *sinner's willingness to apply sincerely for all the blessings of salvation, in his prescribed way; to wait for them in the patient and serious use of all his instituted means; and to make every needful sacrifice, for the sake of obtaining them:* it will follow, that the Lord hath a right to interpose with his power to produce this willing mind, in such instances as he chooses, and to leave others to be hardened by the pride and lusts of their own hearts. He does not indeed make one to differ from another, without wise, righteous, and holy reasons: but they may be such as we cannot discover, or are incapable of comprehending; and he has a right to conceal them from us, if he sees good.

These rights the Lord exercised, when he spared not the angels that sinned, and when he revealed salvation to fallen men. He does the same, when he sends the gospel to one land and not to another; even as he blesses one country with plenty, and visits another with famine. And he acts as a Sovereign also, when he "quickens some who were dead in sin," and leaves others enslaved to their lusts, and entangled in their beloved delusions. If any "have first given to "him, it shall be recompensed to them:" none will be punished who do not deserve it, or above their deservings: but if all have, in different degrees, merited punishment; and if none can expiate his own guilt, or advance any claim to forgiveness or eternal life, as *justly due* to him; then surely the Lord hath a right to bestow them on whom he sees good, to the exclusion of all others.

We are indeed most graciously assured, that "every "one that asketh, receiveth," and as God is "no Re-"specter of persons;" so "in every nation, he that "feareth him, and worketh righteousness," (as all penitent believers do,) meets acceptance with him. But if men cast off his fear, and work wickedness, he may either triumph over their obstinacy by the power of his converting grace, as he did in respect of Saul of Tarsus; or he may give them over to a strong delusion, as he did others who hated his truth. He hath a right to do this, and we have no right to find fault: on the other hand, we should submit to his righteousness in adoring silence, and supplicate his mercy as our only refuge from deserved vengeance. This is our duty and wisdom, as to ourselves: and we have no-

thing to do with the case of others; but to rest satisfied, that "the Judge of all the earth will do right;" and when called to it, "in meekness to instruct those "that oppose themselves, if God, peradventure, will "give them repentance to the acknowledging of the "truth; and that they may recover themselves out of "the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him "at his will."*

III. The LORD hath a right to appoint the way in which he will shew mercy, and to exclude those who will not seek it according to his appointment. As pardoning mercy, and the blessings connected with it, are an unmerited favour, he must have a right to prescribe the terms on which it shall be granted. It is thought reasonable in the affairs of men, for the ruler to declare in what way he will receive offenders to favour; and if they reject his conditions, and insist on their own terms, they are still considered as obstinate rebels: and when a prince hath crushed his factious subjects, so that he hath them entirely in his power; if he be disposed to spare them, he will devise to do it in that manner which may best support his authority, honour the laws, and manifest the unreasonableness of their crimes, and the greatness of his clemency. But the criminals would naturally be disposed to palliate their guilt, avoid humiliation, and secure themselves at all events. They cannot, therefore, be allowed to prescribe the terms of reconciliation. Yet in opposition to all the maxims of justice and sound policy, men reason, object, propose, and act, as if every sin-

* 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.

ner might expect forgiveness and salvation in his own way! Whereas, in common sense, we ought to ask this question, and to use every method of obtaining a satisfactory answer to it. 'What way hath our offend-'ed Sovereign revealed, according to which he will 'shew mercy to sinners?' and this is the more necessary, as he hath repeatedly declared, that there is no other way of being saved.*

All the methods, which men have devised, of obtaining acceptance with God, are calculated to secure the offender from shame and fear, to excuse his crimes, to cherish self-preference or self-complacency, and to diminish his sense of the hatefulness and desert of sin: whilst the honour of the divine law and justice, the interests of holiness, and the peace of the universal and everlasting kingdom of God are comparatively disregarded. But the method which God hath revealed is arranged after another manner, and it is manifestly designed to display the excellent glory of his own justice and mercy, to provide for the honour of his law and government; and to cover the pardoned rebel with shame and confusion, whilst it raises him from the depths of guilt and misery to the height of dignity and felicity. It is not then at all wonderful, that such a plan should fail of meeting with general and cordial approbation. Pride and ambition, as well as other evil dispositions, will resist those assaults which threaten their destruction; and a humbling holy salvation can never suit the taste of a lofty carnal mind.

---

* John xiv. 6. Acts iv. 12.

The preaching of the cross hath always been foolishness to those that perish: and they, who now reason against it, deride it, or revile it, only tread in the steps of ancient scribes and philosophers. But "where is the "scribe? where is the disputer of this world?" Hath not God at all times made foolish their boasted wisdom, "whenever it exalted itself against the knowledge of "Christ?" For, after all that hath been, or can be, objected, it will appear reasonable to all holy creatures, and to all true penitents, that the Lord should secure the honour of his own name and government, whilst he pardons and saves sinners: that he should insist upon their pleading guilty, in the most unequivocal manner; seeking mercy as an unmerited favour, receiving it with unfeigned gratitude, abhorring their former crimes, and thus learning to love fervently, and serve with alacrity, their reconciled God and Father.

The intervention of a mediator is very common in the affairs of men: and at the instance of some person, whose rank, character, or services, entitle him to regard, favour is shewn to those who themselves have no claim to it. This also accords with the divinely appointed method of shewing mercy to sinners. It is evident from facts, that men are often brought into difficult circumstances, through the misconduct of their progenitors, who in some sense represent and act for them: and the only authentick account, that hath been given of the manner, in which the human race was reduced to its present wretched condition, states, that Adam was the representative and surety of his posterity; and that we all fell in and with him, as the

branches with the tree from which they spring. If then a recovery should ever be effected, it is consonant to reason to suppose that it would be the result of a similar arrangement; by "a second Adam," another appointed Representative, the Surety of a new covenant. Such a Mediator, being related to us as one of the same race, and rendering honourable obedience to God for our benefit might properly interpose in our behalf, that favour might be shewn to us for his sake. But as sin hath not only forfeited our title to the reward of righteousness, but also brought us under condemnation: so it might reasonably be expected, that the appointed Mediator should also honour the sanction of the divine law, by submitting voluntarily to such sufferings, as might render it suitable for a God of perfect purity and justice to exempt sinners from punishment, through his intercession for them.

If we suppose the constitution of such a Mediator, the completion of his services and sufferings, and his admission to the exercise of his office; we may then enquire, who are to receive the benefit of his mediation? Is it reasonable, that they, who reject his offered interposition, in self confidence or self-wisdom, or carelessness; aversion to religion, and love of the world, should share the advantages? On the other hand, they who believe the testimony of God respecting the Mediator, and, as humbly conscious that they need such a salvation, apply by faith for an interest in it, may reasonably be considered as exclusively partaking of it. These alone stand related to the Mediator, as his dependents and disciples; faith in Him being the sole bond of their relation to him: therefore, they are jus-

tified and saved by faith alone; whilst others, not standing thus related to him, continue under the condemnation due to their sins, which is aggravated by "neglecting so great salvation."

But who is there, in earth or in heaven, that is able thus to interpose between our offended Sovereign, and his rebellious subjects? Who can take their part, without seeming at least to oppose his authority and glory? Who is competent so to magnify the divine law and justice, by his single obedience and temporary sufferings, as to counterbalance the dishonour done them by the innumerable crimes of many millions of transgressors; and to render their exemption from deserved eternal punishment, and their admission to eternal felicity conducive to the glory of God? In short, Who and What is He, whose Person and services are of such excellency and dignity, as to render his interposition in behalf of condemned criminals, worthy of the regard of the infinite JEHOVAH? All mere men are sinners, which must wholly disqualify them for such an interference. Holy angels, or other pure created intelligences, cannot possibly do more than make suitable returns of love, adoration, and grateful obedience, for benefits already received; and thus ensure the continuance of them: compared with the Lord, even they are as nothing. Had any of them undertaken the sinner's cause, they would have seemed to be accomplices in his rebellion: nor could there be a dignity or worth in their services, in any degree adequate to the high character of Mediator between God and his disobedient subjects; whilst a self-appointed mediator, or one chosen by the offending party, could not have had

a proper admission to the exercise of so high an office.

If then it had been revealed that the most high God was willing to treat with transgressors; through a mediator; and to receive them to favour, in consideration of an obedience, connected with sufferings, to be voluntarily accomplished by *Him:* still no one could have been found intrepid and loving enough to undertake, competent to sustain, or authorized to assume, the arduous office; and the whole must have come to nothing, if God himself had not further interposed.

But it was his *right* to nominate the Mediator; and in his infinite wisdom and love he hath appointed his only-begotten Son, "by whom also he made the "worlds." He is "the second Adam, the LORD from "heaven," even "JEHOVAH our Righteousness;" who, voluntarily assuming our nature into personal union with his Deity, became capable of obedience and suffering, and of infinitely honouring the law and justice of the Father, by fulfilling all righteousness as our Surety, and by offering himself a sacrifice for our sins. Having thus finished his mediatory humiliation, he arose a glorious conqueror over Satan, sin, and death: and, ascending into heaven, "to appear in the "presence of God for us," "he became the Author "of eternal salvation to all them *that obey him.*" But to none else; for he is not a Mediator in behalf of those, who reject his mediation.

"Without controversy, great is the mystery of "godliness, God was manifest in the flesh:" and the mysteries, which this stupendous plan implies, constitute the only specious objection, which can be

brought against it, on the ground of calm reasoning and argument: but why should mysteries be thought inconsistent with the doctrines of revealed religion, when no religion can be without them, that owns an incomprehensible God, the existence of spirits, or the distinction of soul and body, and when even the nature and powers of material substances are inexplicably mysterious?

The doctrine, which we are considering, cannot be proposed and explained with precision, unless we speak of distinct persons in the unity of the Godhead. For the Father who sent his only begotten Son; the Son who was sent; and the Holy Ghost who testifies to, and glorifies the Son, must be in some respects distinct from each other: and we use the word *persons*, as most conveniently expressing that distinction, and not as if it conveyed to us any adequate idea of so incomprehensible a subject. The plan of redemption is of such a nature, that we could not have known any thing of it, except by revelation: and it hath been argued with great force, that the whole design is so foreign to every conception of the human mind, and yet so perfectly suited to manifest the divine glory in our salvation, that its very mysteriousness proves it to be (no human device, but) the contrivance of the only wise God: for "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, "neither have entered into the heart of man, the "things which God hath prepared for them that "love him: but God hath revealed them to us by his "Spirit."*

* 1 Cor. ii. 5.

We can, therefore, do no more than appropriate by faith the information which God hath given us: and if the Scriptures speak of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as standing in certain relations to each other, and sustaining distinct parts in man's salvation; if they are represented as *willing*, and *acting distinctly*, though in perfect harmony; and if the powers, attributes, and operations ascribed to each of them, be peculiar to Deity, and incommunicable to a finite being, (as omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, &c.;) then we have sufficient authority for asserting, that there are three persons in the unity of that God, into whose one name all christians are or ought to be baptized.* The opposers of this mystery, therefore, should either prove that such things are not contained in the scripture, or that the scripture is not the word of God: for till one of these be completely performed; they only argue in a circle, and beg the question, when they assert the doctrine to be irrational, and therefore false. Indeed we know so little of being, in general, that where an evident contradiction is not implied, it only proves a man's arrogance, and rash presumption, to say that it is impossible for a substance to have such and such powers and properties, because he cannot conceive how it can possess them. What then must it be to affirm roundly, that the one living and true God cannot possibly subsist in three distinct coequal Persons; (that is, that he cannot be three in one respect, and one in another,) though it

* Matt. xxviii. 19.

hath often been proved, and cannot be disproved, that he hath revealed this concerning himself? It is impossible fully to explain, or clearly to conceive of, such mysteries; but it is very reasonable to believe them on the Lord's own authenticated testimony: for though the subject be out of the reach of our rational powers, and therefore out of their province; it does not thence follow, that it is *contrary* to any of their sober and warranted decisions: as we do not mean that the Deity is *three* in the same respect in which he is *one*. It does not, therefore, accord with some men's self-voted applause for candour and liberality of sentiment, to censure or ridicule as irrational, superstitious, or enthusiastical bigots, the whole remnant that in this respect adhere to the doctrine of scripture.

The apostle allowed, that his doctrine concerning Christ, as "God manifest in the flesh," was "without controversy a great mystery:" nay, he gloried in it "as the great mystery of Godliness." From a spiritual and believing apprehension of this fundamental truth, all proper dispositions and affections in the hearts of fallen men, are derived; all godliness results from it, is connected with it, and centres in it: and facts evince, that where it is opposed, explained away, or greatly kept out of sight, religion gradually dwindles into a lifeless form, or a heartless task; one truth of revelation is given up after another; and the progress is often very rapid to open impiety, infidelity, and atheism. Whereas vital piety, in its most pure, genuine, and ennobling exercises, hath uniformly most flourished, where this doctrine hath been most

fully preached and attended to. Indeed what can the great enemy of all good devise more effectual, entirely to destroy godliness from among men, than to set them against "the great mystery of Godliness?" But the church is built on this rock; and neither the power and rage of persecutors, nor the sagacity of heretical teachers, will ever be able to subvert it. Yet the vigorous efforts of the gates of hell, in the the present age, beyond the example of former times, should excite the friends of truth, "to contend earn-
"estly for the faith, which was once delivered to the
"saints."

A reflecting man will indeed make a pause, before he embraces so wonderful a doctrine, as an article in his creed. That he, who made and upholds all worlds, and *for* whom they were all created, who is truly God, equal to and one with the Father, should "be-
"come flesh, and dwell among us," in order that he might obey, suffer, and die in our nature and for our salvation, is such a stupendous instance of condescension, compassion, and love, that we cannot attain to any adequate conception of it! And even the size of our globe, and the insignificancy of the human race, compared with the whole creation, will startle our minds, whenever we deeply think on this subject. But when we consider, that the earth was, as it were, the chosen theatre, on which the Lord was pleased to make himself known, in all his harmonious perfections, to his rational creatures; that the whole was devised and accomplished, "to the praise of his glo-
"ry;" that the meanness and vileness of those objects, proportionably recommended his mercy and

grace as most illustrious and adorable; and that all holy intelligences through eternal ages will admire and celebrate that display of the divine character, which was made by the cross of Emmanuel: such reflections, I say, will satisfy the humble enquirer; and, whilst he is filled with astonishment at this "love of "Christ which passeth knowledge," he will by no means deem it incredible. For, an adequate reason being assigned, why such a plan should be formed in the eternal counsels of God, even "for the praise of "his own glory" in man's salvation; and sufficient evidence being given, that it is indeed the word of God, "who cannot lie;" his doubts and hesitation, like those of the incredulous apostle, will vanish, or rather be exchanged for adoring wonder, joy, and gratitude; and he will no longer delay to address the incarnate Saviour as "his Lord and his God."

It is also the uniform doctrine of scripture, that "without shedding of blood, there is no remission of "sins:" and where the Mosaick law appointed no sacrifice, the transgressor was left to bear his own iniquity. In common language an atonement implies the idea of compensation: he, who is pardoned, has not made atonement, though a pacification has taken place; but he, that hath born the punisment due to his crimes, hath atoned for them, though no pacification follow. In a lax way of speaking about human affairs, repentance is sometimes said to atone for a slight offence: but generally, in more important matters, some service, or suffering, which reinstates the law in its honour, is supposed to be required: so that the language of scripture on this subject coincides with that

of the more exact reasoners on the affairs of human government.

The institution of sacrifices represented the imputation of guilt to the innocent, by translation from the sinner to the devoted and spotless animal; so that the latter suffered death, and was either wholly or in part consumed on the altar, by fire the emblem of the divine vengeance; whilst the former escaped deserved punishment: and every one would allow, that no more injustice was done to those animals, which were offered for sacrifice, than to such as were slaughtered for food. "But it was impossible that the blood of "bulls and of goats should take away sin." If it were enquired, for what reason it could not? no answer can be given but this; because such sacrifices were no adequate display of the divine justice, or the desert of sin; nor could they reinstate the law of God in its pristine honour and dignity. The same reason is equally valid, against the sufficiency and efficacy of every sacrifice, which any mere creature could offer: and, therefore, the only begotten of the Father interposed and said, "Lo, I come, to do thy will O God:" and as his obedience unto death was, strictly speaking, of infinite value and efficacy; so it was most honourable for God to pardon and bless believing sinners on the account of it.—But how, say some persons, can it consist with justice to punish the innocent and holy instead of the guilty? This question hath often been asked, and as often solidly answered; and yet it is frequently alluded to, as if it contained an insuperable objection to the doctrine of redemption by the blood of Christ. Let us, however, be careful not

to mistake confidence for demonstration; and not to imagine, that the hasty conclusions of our partial uninformed understandings must needs accord with the decisions of infinite wisdom.

Human sacrifices were never appointed by the Lord, but were always the objects of his peculiar abhorrence: yet I apprehend, this did not imply, that it would have been inconsistent with his justice, to order the death of any man, in any way that he pleased. But as every man deserves death for his own sins; so none could expiate the guilt of others, or properly typify the spotless Lamb of God: and since he was not pleased to institute such oblations, it would have been a combination of the most impious presumption with the most atrocious murder, for men of their own minds to have presented them.

But indeed, the life and soul of man are not his own, so as to be disposed of at his own pleasure independently of the Creator's will. If then any man could be found who had never sinned, and he could be willing to devote himself to death and destruction, in order to expiate the crimes of another, he would have no right to do it; and even could this be admitted and accepted, it would be no more than an adequate display of the divine justice, in the salvation of a single person, who had deserved the wrath of God. Nor can any reason be assigned, why the blood of an innocent animal could not take away sin, which will not also prove, that the *temporal* death of a mere man even if he were perfectly holy, would be utterly insufficient to expiate the guilt of a single transgressor, or to rescue him from *eternal* condemnation: much

less then could it atone for the multiplied and heinous sins of unnumbered millions.

But if we admit the "great mystery of godliness," we then behold a divine Person, dwelling in our nature, as his holy temple; and possessing such a right in his body and soul, as no other man could possibly acquire. He voluntarily assumed his humanity, in sovereign wisdom and love, for this very purpose, with the concurring appointment of the Father and the omnipotent operation of the Divine Spirit, by whom it was produced and preserved perfectly holy. Having, therefore, honoured the law by an obedience of more value, than that of all mere creatures, he magnified its awful sanction, by enduring it, in his willing submission to the agonizing and ignominious death of the cross. Thus the justice of God was infinitely displayed, and every purpose was completely answered; though he was subject to no more than a temporal curse to redeem us from one that would have been eternal: and it became honourable to all the divine perfections, that being risen, and ascended into heaven, he should be exalted to the mediatorial throne, and exercise sovereign authority and almighty power, as dwelling in human nature, for the salvation of all those who believe in him.

The law of "loving our neighbour as ourselves," implies that we ought willingly to bear a less suffering, when we can by so doing preserve another from greater misery. The man Christ Jesus was under this law: and being able, through the union of his humanity with the Godhead, to rescue an innumerable multitude of the human race from eternal punishment,

and to bring them to eternal felicity, by enduring temporal agonies and death for their sakes; it was essential to the perfection of his obedience, that he should thus suffer for their salvation. He was their voluntary Surety, who had undertaken to make payment for them; and he was able to do it without impoverishing himself; so that he attained to his mediatorial glory, the perfections and law of God were honoured, and man's salvation was effected, "by his one oblation of "himself."

What then was there in this transaction inconsistent even with our ideas of justice? The creditor does not scruple to receive payment from the surety, when the original debtor is insolvent: his voluntary engagement makes him in that case the debtor; and, provided the payment do not much impoverish him, the requisition of it is not deemed censurable, even on the ground of humanity. Thus payment "was exacted" of our Surety, "and he became answerable." Even if a man should willingly submit to a less loss or suffering, (as a large fine, or tedious imprisonment,) in order to rescue another from capital punishment: provided the vigour of the administration could be thus supported, it would not be deemed inconsistent with justice, that the innocent should suffer instead of the guilty, for, "*volenti non fit injuria.*"* A father hath been known to offer so large a sum, to ransom the life of a son condemned for treason, that had it been accepted, he must have suffered exceedingly great

* No wrong is done to him who suffers willingly.

degradation: but the refusal in such cases is not grounded on the injustice of the innocent willingly suffering for the guilty; but on the insufficiency of such a compensation to the violated peace of the community.

Who then can deny, that the Lord had a right to provide in this manner for the honour of his own name, in pardoning and saving his rebellious creatures? or that he hath a right finally to exclude from his favour all those, without exception, who persist in rejecting his method of salvation? But the allowance of these Rights of God, is intimately connected with the reception of two doctrines, which are of principal importance in christianity, viz. that of 'a real atonement for sin, being made by the vicarious sufferings and death of Christ, who is "God manifest in the "flesh;" and that of 'justification before God by faith in Christ alone, and not by any of our own good works.' These are indeed necessary to distinguish living faith from that which is dead and unprofitable, and for other important purposes; but they can do nothing towards the sinner's justification: for, the true believer is *already* "*justified by faith:*" but "the "wrath of God abideth on every unbeliever;" and none of his own works can avail him any thing *for justification*, so long as he continues in unbelief.

IV. The Lord hath a right to determine the qualifications requisite for those, who shall be at last received into heaven; and the manner in which they shall "he made meet to be partakers of that inheri- "tance of the saints in light." The title to this blessedness is wholly the gift of God through Jesus Christ;

and the meetness for it is an additional bounty, by which they are made capable of enjoying it.

No employment or object can give delight, without we possess the capacity or appetite to which it is suited. Every animal is happy in its own element, and relishes the pleasures suited to its own nature: but transposition produces uneasiness, distress, and at length destruction. Some men find satisfaction in one course of life; others seek their enjoyment in a contrary pursuit: and, unless a change could be wrought in the state of their minds, they would be rendered very uneasy, if their situations and manners of life were reversed. One man relishes the active scenes of publick life, another loves retirement: some delight in learning, others in dissipated or sensual pleasures: many have a taste for and are highly gratified with musick, poetry, painting, and sculpture, whilst others disregard such ingenious elegances, and are much pleased with plans of improvement in agriculture or mechanicks. This diversity of tastes, these varied capacities of finding satisfaction in pursuits, which are insipid and irksome to others, arise from the different state of men's minds, by nature, or through education and habit: and he, who entirely wants that peculiar turn of mind, which pertains to any employment or pursuit, is wholly excluded from the pleasure which other men take in it. He can have no communion with them, but is uneasy, out of his element, and a troublesome intruder, when he attempts to associate with them.

That state of the mind and heart which the scripture calls *holiness*, is precisely the same to the soul,

which health is to the body; and without it there can be no *spiritual* enjoyment. Aversion to God and the exercises of religious worship, pride, ambition, envy, hatred, avarice, and sensuality, are diseases of the soul, which produce uneasiness, and tend to misery. But the capacity of perceiving and delighting in the consummate glory and beauty of the divine perfections, and a disposition supremely to love, admire, and adore the excellency of God, as manifested in his works; sweetly acquiescing in his precepts and providential appointments; united with humility, gratitude, simple dependence, holy zeal, expansive love of our brethren and neighbours, justice, purity, temperance, truth, and meekness, constitute a healthful state of mind. As far as these prevail, we enjoy heaven; and when contrary principles have the ascendancy, we experience a misery in a degree resembling that of hell.

The joys of heaven are (rationally as well as scripturally) supposed to consist in the manifested presence and complete enjoyment of God: but as he is infinitely holy, what happiness could the beatifick vision afford to the sensual, the dissipated, the covetous, the ambitious, or the profane? Unless we are previously made meet for these pure and spiritual pleasures; the society, the objects, the employments, and the adorations, which constitute the happiness of the saints in light, would be wholly incongruous to us: we should be out of our element in the holy residence of God: every thing would weary, disgust, or distress us: even the happiness enjoyed by others would excite our envy and malignant passions: our dissatisfied minds would be tempted to wish the interruption or destruction of

those joys which we could not share: finding this impossible, our torture would be increased, and we should wish to retire from a scene which so disquieted us; nor would rebellion and blasphemous thoughts of God himself fail to arise in our disappointed hearts. So that admission into heaven (were that possible,) could not preserve unholy creatures from positive misery.

It should also be observed, that the holiness and happiness of pardoned sinners must have an intimate connexion with the remembrance of their former state and character, and the manner of their deliverance. Deep humiliation, ardent gratitude for such unmerited mercy, and an especial regard to the condescending compassion of their great Redeemer, who shed his blood for their salvation, must be essential to that holiness to which they are recovered: and it is impossible, but that they should have a whole system of feelings, (so to speak,) peculiar to themselves, in which creatures that never sinned, cannot have any communion with them. The objects of their special contemplation, the topicks on which they will delight to expatiate, and the sources of their love, joy, gratitude, and adoration, must differ from those of such rational agents, as never were in their situation, and never wanted a similar deliverance: even as a condemned traitor, who being penitent has received pardon and great preferment, must have other sensations and cause for gratitude, than those courtiers have, whose loyalty has never been interrupted.

The scriptural representations, therefore, of the heaven into which pardoned sinners are admitted, peculiarly relate to their continual ascriptions of praise to

God, and to the Lamb that was slain, and who redeemed them with his blood; as it might rationally have been supposed that they would. If then, it were possible for a sinner to be recovered to the favour of God, and to angelick holiness, without self-abasement for sin, gratitude for redemption, and a strong attachment to the Person, honour, and cause of the Redeemer: he could not join the songs of the saints in light, assist in their adorations, or participate their peculiar joys. Nay, he must either shun or be excluded from the society of angels, if he did not judge "the Lamb "that was slain," worthy of all possible honour, worship, power, and love, from every creature in the whole universe.

It is indeed impossible, that a sinner can be made holy, without being brought into that frame of mind which hath been described, as the indispensable qualification for heaven; a wedding-garment, the want of which will ensure any man's exclusion, when the King shall come to see the guests. But if this could not be so undeniably proved; the Lord would nevertheless have full right to determine, that without this judgment, these affections, and this capacity for the work and worship of heaven, no man should find admission thither; and to decree irreversibly, that unless a measure of this holy state of mind be obtained on earth, the sinner's exclusion shall be final and eternal; that the "wicked shall be driven away in his wick-"edness," and that he "shall be destroyed for "ever."

He hath also a sovereign right to appoint the manner, in which sinners shall be made partakers of these

qualifications. This part of our subject comprises the doctrine of regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit, which evidently constitutes *a grand peculiarity*, and an essential part, of revelation: nor can any man consistently allow the divine authority of the scriptures, and interpret them soberly, according to the common rules of language, without being constrained to own the necessity of a divine influence from the Spirit of God, to communicate spiritual life to those who were dead in sin, and utterly incapable of relishing the holy pleasures of communion with God, and other exercises of pure religion; and to recover the soul to the divine image, by a gradual transformation and renovation; and that without such a supernatural change, no sinner can be saved.

This doctrine is commonly derided and vilified as irrational and enthusiastick, without any discrimination of the different ways, in which it may be, and hath been, explained. Yet, if indeed the Lord be perfectly holy, and the society, employment, and joys of heaven be also holy; and if it be allowed, (what a man must be hardy to deny, since facts demonstrate it,) that we are naturally carnal, and have no relish for spiritual excellency or spiritual pleasures: then the doctrine will be seen to have as firm a ground in reason as in scripture. Such an entire internal change must take place, or men can never delight in God, or be happy in heaven. A divine Agent must produce a renovation, to which all other power is evidently inadequate, and which is energetically represented in scripture, under the metaphors of a *new birth*, a *new cre-*

ation, and a *resurrection* from the death of sin unto newness of life.

Indeed facts evince, that they, who reject this appointed method of sanctification, uniformly continue enslaved to some sinful passion, and entire strangers to that spirituality which capacitates the soul to delight in such services on earth, as correspond in some measure with the work and worship of heaven. And, surely, the Lord hath a right to leave those under the power of their proud and carnal nature, who refuse to depend on the promised influences of the divine Spirit to renew their souls to the image of God in righteousness and true holiness! He cannot be under any obligation to exert his omnipotence to rescue from sin and misery, those persons, who deny the possibility, or reality, of such a change, or who deride, despise, and revile it. If men think that they can make themselves holy, they are allowed to try what they can do: but if they persist in the vain attempt, or rest satisfied without an internal renovation; the Lord may justly leave them "to be filthy still," and exclude them as polluted from his holy inheritance.

Moreover, the Lord hath a right to give the Holy Spirit, in what way he sees good: and he hath promised this inestimable blessing, through the mediation of his Son, as the purchase of his atonement, and the fruit of his intercession, to be sought by faith in his name. But many seem to detach the work of the Spirit from redemption by the blood of Christ; and to forget that his principal office is to glorify the Saviour, in the sinner's heart, and in the church. Now, if men will seek the gift of God, not in the way of his ap-

pointing, but in one of their own devising; he hath a right to withhold it from them: even though the consequence be, that they are left to mistake impressions, feelings, change of opinions, convictions, or high affections of a mere selfish kind, for a new creation unto holiness. Nor can their delusions be any impeachment of his justice, truth, and goodness.

Divine influences are absolutely needful to change a reasonable creature from carnal to spiritual: and the nature of them will best appear, by considering their effects; as they lead men to take pleasure in every part of God's worship and service; to hate and forsake all sin; to receive Christ as their Prophet, Priest, and King; and to produce the fruits of righteousness, from evangelical motives; in every part of their conduct; uprightly and without reserve, though not perfectly. These are "the fruits of the Spirit:" and it is not at all necessary that we should be able to answer questions, or solve difficulties, concerning the *modus operandi*, or the manner in which the divine Agent produces this new creation: for we scarcely know any thing of the manner, in which the process of nature in vegetation, and the communication of natural life, is conducted in the ordinary course of things. It is more important for us to know, that if we would possess a spiritual judgment, with holy dispositions and affections, and perform any acceptable service to God; we must depend on the Holy Spirit, to illuminate, renovate, strengthen, help, and comfort us; we must seek this blessing by faith in Christ, using all appointed means, and avoiding impediments and hindrances; and we must be willing to give him the whole glory,

of "working in us to will and to do, according to "his pleasure." This may suffice for every practical purpose; and we should thus seek our meetness for heaven, as well as our title to it, by faith in the Lord Jesus, and his meritorious intercession for sinners.

V. The Lord hath a right to appoint the means of grace, in attending on which sinners shall receive from him the blessings of salvation, and render to him the tribute of honour and gratitude due to him for them. This subject coincides in good measure with a topick insisted on in the former part of this treatise.* Yet the sinner's approach to God, and acceptable worship of him; his application for the supply of all his wants from the Saviour's fulness; and the glory ascribed by him to the God of all grace, even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, form a consideration distinct from that of the services required of holy creatures. The appointments before considered are still obligatory: but the redeemed must attend on them in some respects after a different manner, and for other purposes; whilst there are others, peculiar to the religion of a sinner. The ordinances of the New Testament suit the ends proposed by them: and whist they ascribe glory to God our Saviour, and honour all his perfections and wonderful works; they are calculated to illuminate the mind, to affect and meliorate the heart, and to form that spiritual judgment and disposition, which hath been proved essential to true religion.

---

* Section V.

This might be distinctly shewn to be the tendency of daily and diligent searching the sciptures, in humble dependence on the teaching of the Spirit of truth, to enable us to understand, believe, love and obey them: of prayer, secret, social, and publick, united with humble confessions, adoring praises and thanksgivings, and affectionate supplications for our brethren and neighbours: of meditation on the cross of Christ, the attributes and works of God, death, judgment, and the eternal world: of the communion that believers maintain with each other, in edifying conversation and acts of worship: of baptism, (the initiatory ordinance of christianity,) in the one "name of the "Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," with water, (the universal purifier,) as the outward sign of the washing away of sin; and as the profession of our reliance on the Father's mercy, through the Redemption of the Son, and by the sanctification of the Spirit; our devotedness to the service of the triune God our Saviour; and an earnest desire that our children also may share the blessings, and sustain the character, of christians. And finally, of the Lord's Supper, where we unite in confessing our lost estate as sinners, in avowing our belief of evangelical truth, our obligations to him who ransomed our souls with his blood, and our purpose of yielding ourselves to his service, and joining ourselves to him and his people, to walk with them in peace and holiness. All these institutions, if properly and seriously attended on, are admirably suited to produce the intended effects, and to subserve the manifestation of the divine glory and the salvation of our souls.

But if this were less evident, the Lord would nevertheless have an undeniable right to appoint the means of grace; and it would be our bounden duty to approach him by them. Nor can we reasonably question his right to withhold his grace and salvation from all those, who neglect these means: whether they substitute human inventions in their stead; or, confiding in their superior talents, conclude that such helps are not necessary for *them;* or neglect all godliness, supposing moral decency of conduct to be sufficient; or whatever else may be the pretence of their disobedience.

When this matter shall be fully investigated, it will be found that all those who have come short of salvation, in places favoured with the light of revelation, in one way or other neglected the *due* attendance on instituted means: and that the Lord left them, in his righteous sovereignty, under the influence of pride, sloth, and ungodliness, to the fatal consequences of their own perverse choice.

Among the appointed means of rendering sinners wise unto salvation, the publick preaching of the gospel has a peculiar pre-eminence; for "faith comes by "hearing." The world has indeed at all times treated it with contempt, as "the foolishness of preaching:" yet every age has experienced it to be "the power of "God unto salvation," because "it pleases him by "it to save them that believe:" and the prevalence of genuine piety has at all times and in all places, born proportion to the degree, in which the whole doctrine of Christ, our Prophet, Priest, and King, (in respect of his person, atonement, mediation, grace, love, au-

thority, and faithfulness, with his truths, invitations, promises, warnings, precepts, and counsels;) has thus been made known to mankind: or in the emphatical words of the apostle, to the degree in which, "Christ hath been set forth as evidently crucified "among them." The power of God is engaged to give efficacy to this kind of preaching; but all other doctrines are left to their native energy, whether that be more or less. The suitableness of the institution might be shewn; but it suffices to say, that God hath prescribed it. His right to do this cannot be disputed; and our wisdom and duty consist in submitting to his authority. The minister, therefore, is required to preach the gospel of salvation faithfully and zealously, to the utmost of his ability and opportunity: and others ought to promote the preaching of it, as far as they have it in their power; and to attend on it statedly and occasionally, on the Lord's day, and at other times, when no real hindrance prevents, and when other duties do not interfere.

The Lord hath also a right to confine the blessing to those, who honour his appointed medium of communication; and to exclude all such as despise and neglect it. Some persons, (perhaps overrating their own abilities or attainments,) deem it beneath them to attend on preachers, who are considered as incompetent to give them instruction; or they think reading and study better calculated to answer the design. Others prefer those teachers, who deliver moral essays, or discuss philosophical questions, to such as preach of regeneration and redemption, with the distinguishing nature and effects of them. Others speak

and act, as if joining in forms of devotion were the sole end of assembling publickly for religious purposes: and they consider the publick preaching of the doctrine of Christ to be nearly, or wholly superfluous. But if the professed minister of God neglect this grand means of saving sinners, he will be liable to condemnation for disobeying his orders, and his other services will be generally useless and often mischievous. They, in every station, who would do good to mankind, by rendering them more sober, righteous, and godly; and yet do not consider the preaching of the gospel as the grand means of effecting their purpose; need not wonder to find that their endeavours are not crowned with much success. And the man who would seek the edification of his own soul, or who desires that his children should fear and serve the Lord; and yet neglects to attend on the preaching of the gospel when he has opportunity, or to bring them with him, has no reason to expect a blessing; because he sets up his own will and wisdom, in opposition to the authority and appointment of God.

No doubt other means are often blessed for all these purposes; and the doctrine of salvation is disseminated by the reading of the scriptures, and other good books, by letters, conversation, and in various other ways; but these are principally useful, in first exciting men's attention to divine things, when the preaching of the gospel, in its genuine purity, is not vouchsafed; not where it is *proudly*, *contemptuously*, *indolently*, or *timidly* neglected: for that constitutes a direct refusal to recognize the Lord's right to appoint his own means; after the example of Cain, who may

be supposed to have preferred his own devices to God's express institutions.

VI. Connected with this, we may observe, that the Lord has a right to nominate his own ambassadors, or messengers to mankind: as well as his vicegerents in the government of the world. The latter are the ministers of his providence, the former the ministers of his word, and the stewards of his mysteries: thus far there is a coincidence: but one remarkable difference must be noticed. Every man who is established in authority is, *for the time*, the Lord's vicegerent. "The powers *that be* are ordained of God;" and we are not cautioned in scripture against corrupt rulers, or required or even allowed to disregard them. But we are instructed by the same word, not to look on every man, who has an outward appointment to the ministry, "as the messenger of the LORD of hosts:" on the contrary we are directed to distinguish between true and false teachers; and "to beware of false pro-"phets—for by their fruits we may know them." It should therefore, be first seriously and candidly enquired, whether the person in question be indeed the Lord's ambassador to his sinful creatures? or whether his spirit, conduct, and doctrine warrant a persuasion, that he is a servant of Christ, employed in teaching men the way of salvation? When this is determined; we shall perceive that the Lord's right to appoint his own messengers implies many essential duties, obligatory upon all men: "for he that receiv-"eth whomsoever he sends receiveth him."

There have been times, in which nominal ministers of religion, without proper discrimination of charac-

ter, were superstitiously venerated, and lavishly provided for; and too great cause has been given for exclamations against priestcraft, and spiritual encroachments or usurpations: nor can it be said, that at present, the funds, which have long been appropriated to the support of the clergy, are unexceptionably applied. But superstition seems on every side to give place to impiety and infidelity: all ministers are considered by numbers as useless or mischievous; no discrimination is made between the exemplary pastor, who labours in the word and doctrine, and men of a contrary description; no medium seems to be thought of, between superstitious veneration and profane contempt; and there is ground to apprehend, that it will, ere long, be the prevailing idea, that ministers of all kinds, sentiments, and characters, should be cashiered, left to indigence, or driven to secular employments: the consequences of which would be, a gradual, and not a very tardy, destruction of all religion.

It is, therefore, proper to enter a protest against this flagrant violation of the rights of God; as well as to call men seriously to reflect on the consequences of such a measure: and it may suffice to propose a few questions on the subject. Has not the great Proprietor of the earth a right to prescribe what rules he pleases, in respect of the use, that he would have made of that proportion, which he allots to nations or individuals? Is it not reasonable, that we should honour Him with our substance; and, that we should consecrate a portion of it to his immediate service, in any way he sees good to appoint? Can his worship be conducted, or can persons be qualified to lead the de-

votions of others, or instruct them in his truths and will, and be employed in this manner, without a considerable expence? Hath he not a right to demand a proportion of men's property for this purpose, as well as to pay tribute to support the expences of civil government; as both are his ordinances, for the benefit of mankind? Does not the whole scripture require this from the professed people of God? And is not the title of ministers to a decent subsistence inseparable from the divine authority of revelation, and confirmed by every external and internal argument adduced in support of it? Would not then, depriving them of their maintenance by a national act amount to a national renunciation of christianity, and apostacy from God and religion? And finally, do not all those, who want (not to regulate or alter the method of their maintenance, or to proportion it in another manner, but) to get rid of the expence of it altogether, evidently shew their aversion to religion, their contempt of God, and their idolatrous love of the world, and the things of the world?*

But whilst such questions may very properly be proposed, in the present state of human affairs: yet the friends of religion need be under no alarm on this account. The promises, which secure the church against the assaults of every enemy, ensure also a succession of faithful witnesses: and the Lord will most certainly provide for them, and also teach them to be well satisfied with their scanty subsistence:

---

* Mal. iii. 8—10.

whilst the interests of the covetous, the ambitious, the ignorant, or profligate clergy of any denomination, are comparatively of little consequence.

We have allowed, that men should judge who are, and who are not, the Lord's ambassadors or stewards: but it must be added, that the determination ought to be made, by the rules of his word, and not by the maxims of a vain world. "We have this treasure in "earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power "may be of God, and not of us." Many are sent and owned of Him for great usefulness, who appear very despicable to the self-confident and carnally minded. Perhaps they are deficient in learning or other admired accomplishments; they are not distinguished by superior abilities; they have manifold infirmities; or the rank in life, whence they were called, was low and obscure: and on such grounds they are slighted, as well as for the subject of their preaching. But the Lord sees good to employ such servants in his work, "that "no flesh should glory in his presence,"* and to shew that their doctrine is made effectual, not by the excellency of man's speech, but by the power of the Holy Spirit. He has a right to appoint whom he pleases to his work; and they who deride, oppose, or neglect them on that account, exclude themselves from the blessing, which more humble and teachable persons appropriate.

The ministers of God may in very many things be inferior to their auditors; but they must magnify their

* 1 Cor. i. 29—31.

office: they are merely a voice, and the Lord is the Speaker, as far as they declare his truths; and he can speak by whom he will, or edify the wisest and most learned of the human race, by the words of the meanest of all those, who ever spoke in his name. But let these hints suffice on a topick, which may be deemed improper to be insisted on, by one who is himself employed as a minister: the apostle Paul has, however, repeatedly discussed the subject; and to his epistles I refer the reader for the particulars of those duties, which are owing to the Lord's ambassadors, and of the guilt and danger that are incurred by neglecting them.

VII. God has a right to order all things in his providence, for the benefit of his believing people; even when this is connected with multiplied calamities upon, or the tremendous destruction of his enemies, how numerous soever they may be. It will hardly be disputed by a reasonable man, that God may justly prefer the happiness of such as love and obey him, to that of those who rebel against him, and blaspheme him: and if, in his abundant mercy, he reconciles a number of rebels to himself, through the gospel of his Son; so that they become his friends and worshippers, whilst others persist in their enmity; he may justly arrange every providential event in subserviency to the good of the former, without any equal or comparable regard to the welfare of the latter. But if they are at length brought to repentance and faith in Christ, they too shall have peace with God, and their portion among his friends.

This is evidently the doctrine of revelation; "all "things," says the apostle, "are for your sakes;" "all things are your's, for ye are Christ's:" and the covenant of grace secures these blessings to believers by an irrevocable engagement. Many things relative to this doctrine, have been strenuously opposed, and thought liable to insuperable objections; perhaps, in a degree from inattention to the subject, or from viewing it through a false medium: for the character and behaviour of the persons concerned are inseparable from their privileges; if they act inconsistently with their profession, they proportionably want evidence, that they are interested in these promises; and none who commit habitual and allowed sin, and die impenitent, will be found among this favoured company, whatever their creed or confidence may have been.

But I do not mean to discuss so controverted a subject, in this place. It is manifest that all the angels are ministering spirits unto Christ, for the benefit of his true disciples: that he is Head over all things, as their Protector and Friend; that the rise and fall of empires, and other grand events which occur in providence, as well as more ordinary dispensations, are regulated as best conduces to their advantage; that life and death, things present and things to come, are their's; that Jesus, their Brother and Friend, hath the keys of the grave, and of the unseen world; and that persecutions, tribulations, and temptations, work together for their good. Thus all the circumstances of their continuance here, and removal hence, are ordered, by infinite wisdom, in entire love to their souls; the earth shall re-

main, till the whole company of the redeemed be gathered in, and made meet for heaven; and the resurrection of the dead, and the day of judgment with its important and eternal consequences, will subserve their final and complete felicity.

As this is the undeniable right, and determined purpose of God; we ought to be silent before him, not daring to object to any of his dealings: we should submit to his righteousness, and deprecate his displeasure; and in preference to all other interests or distinctions, we should desire and seek admission into the company of his people; and then patiently endure trials, waiting the Lord's time of deliverance, in entire reliance on his wisdom, truth, and love; and in confident expectation of deriving important advantage from all those events, that now dismay or distress us.

Many other particulars might be adduced, and shewn to be the unalienable rights of God. He allots to every man his term of probation, and preparation for a future judgment; and the measure of his religious advantages and opportunities: he determines the degree in which he will bear with a sinner's provocations, before he gives him up to judicial hardness of heart, or cuts him off by death: he distributes to every one his measure of talents, trials, and comforts, and appoints the situation, rank, and work of every individual, in the church, and the community: and he will dispense rewards and punishments at the last, as he sees good, and without admitting of any appeal from his sovereign award. Each of these might have been made the subject of a distinct section; and the same

train of reasoning, concerning the Rights of God and our duties, would have been applicable and conclusive.

Indeed the subject is almost inexhaustible: and the selection, which hath been made as a specimen, was principally suggested by the consideration of the state of society in the present age, and the peculiar methods adopted in opposing the doctrines and precepts of revealed religion; and in treating with indignant contempt whatever the Lord hath determined to honour, in his word, or by his providence.

But a serious and attentive mind is the grand requisite for making a right judgment in subjects of this nature: and if any person should cast his eye over these pages, with a disposition to turn them into ridicule; to seek objections to the mode of reasoning employed in them, through averson to the conclusions deduced from it; to give them a cursory perusal, as little interested in the discussion, or *merely* to gratify his curiosity, by examining what could be proposed to the publick with such a title: I cannot entertain any sanguine expectation, that he will derive benefit from the work, nor could this have been reasonably hoped, even if it had been executed in a manner more worthy of the cause that is pleaded in it. On the other hand, the candid, diligent, humble, and obedient enquirer after truth, may probably derive from it some assistance in this interesting pursuit; whilst the experienced christian will perceive, that the principles, on which we proceed, are applicable to a vast variety of particulars in his own concerns; and that the Lord hath a right to lay those burdens on him, to take those comforts from him, and to require those self-denying ser-

vices at his hands, which have most tempted him to despair, repine, or turn aside from the path of submissive obedience: and that he ought on such occasions to recognize the Rights of God, to rely on his wisdom, truth, and love, to humble himself under his mighty hand, and to say "it is the Lord, let him "do what seemeth him good."

It is manifest from what hath been stated, that the Rights of God are very little regarded, either in the reasonings or actions of men; nay that they are, in general, most shamefully neglected, questioned, or opposed: no man can deny this, without directly patronizing ingratitude, rebellion, and impiety; or avowing himself an atheist, or such a sceptick as excludes the God, he pretends to acknowledge, from all concern in the affairs of the universe. This again demonstrates that the state of the world is exactly what the Bible represents it to be; and that men want just such a remedy, as is therein revealed. So that the principles and reasonings of infidels, (as well as the irreligion and wickedness of mankind in general,) abundantly confirm the truth, suitableness, and value of that revelation, which they despise and oppose.

The serious reader will also perceive, that if all persons paid a due regard to the Rights of God, in every part of their conduct; it would conduce far more to true liberty, peace, and happiness, than all other means united can do; that no contests about the rights of men, or forms of government, in what manner soever they may be adjusted, or terminated, will do any thing effectual to meliorate the condition of mankind in general, till the Rights of God be more

attended to; till his gospel be embraced, his ordinances frequented, his commandments obeyed, his example imitated, his favour supremely valued, his providence submitted to and depended on, and his glory made the great object in their habitual conduct, by governors, and subjects, and by men of every rank and description in society. This, and this alone would terminate wars, massacres, oppression, slavery, faction, fraud, violence, licentiousness, and all the other crimes and mischiefs, which fill the earth with confusion and misery. So that it will at last be known, that those persons are in reality, the best friends of mankind, (though they do not here expect to be thought so,) who are most careful to render to the Lord the honour due unto his name, and most zealous and assiduous by all proper means, to bring all others within the sphere of their influence, (whether that be more circumscribed, or more extensive,) to do the same; according to the several duties of their situation, in the family, the community, and the church of God.

A

VINDICATION

OF THE

DIVINE INSPIRATION

OF

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES,

AND THE DOCTRINES CONTAINED IN THEM,

IN ANSWER TO

MR. PAINE's AGE OF REASON.

Be ready always to give an answer to every man, that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear. 1 Peter iii. 15.

For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? 1 Sam. xvii. 26.

THIRD EDITION.

Preface to the Second Edition.

A CONSIDERABLE change seems to have taken place in the minds of numbers, respecting *The Age of Reason*, and it celebrated author, since the first publication of this answer: yet it may be feared that infidelity and scepticism are not proportionably decreased. Perhaps the enemies of revelation have even established themselves on more tenable ground; and, by conceding that the books of the Old and New Testament are *authentick records*, they derive some advantage in denying that they are *divinely inspired:* but if this point be maintained, the rest is of comparatively small moment; for we still want an *authoritative standard of faith and practice.* It was on this ground therefore, that the author ventured to meet the Goliath of modern infidelity: and as he has sufficient evidence that his answer has not been wholly unsuccessful, he was not willing it should be out of print in Britain: as it has been printed and circulated on the other side of the Atlantick.

It seemed, however, unnecessary to take up the reader's time, in exposing the ignorance, errors, or misrepresentations of Mr. P. or in answering such *sophisms*, as he alone would have advanced. Some passages therefore are retrenched, in order to render the answers to plausible objections more nervous, by bringing them nearer together, and in some instances enlarging on them.

The author has also bestowed considerable pains, in making the whole more instructive and convincing to the serious enquirer. He hopes therefore, that the work is rendered more suitable to the case of those, who, without having read *The Age of Reason*, are yet perplexed with difficulties concerning the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, and wish to have their objections fairly considered, their arguments answered, and their doubts removed.

In respect of Mr. P.'s work, it may be proper to observe, that it by no means accords to its title. *The Age of Reason*, is far more replete with wit and rhetorick, than with sober discussion and solid argument. It is in fact an attempt to reduce to practice Lord Shaftsbury's famous maxim that *ridicule is the test of truth;* except that scurrility and acrimony frequently predominate. It is easy to answer Mr. P.'s *reasoning:* but his *confident assertions, vehement declamations, and smart repartees, are very imposing.* Every reader should therefore pause from time to time; and when he has been carried away by the Author's popular eloquence and wit; he should seriously ask himself, What *argument* does all this contain?

Hitherto the human race has, in one way or other, been generally destitute of true religion; and that author must be very sanguine, who expects to produce a sudden revolution. There is however no fear, 'lest the Bible should fall,' as Mr. P. seems to predict; for it has stood many far more formidable assaults, and will survive every opponent: but doubtless numbers will fall and perish, by means of the publications of infidels: and on the other hand a few individuals may be preserved or recovered by every effort to counteract them; and this may suffice to stimulate our exertions.

When Mr. P. thought himself near death, he rejoiced that he had published the first part of *The Age of Reason.* This indeed proved *the sincerity of his enmity to the Bible:* but should a christian adduce a circumstance of this kind as a *proof that his principles were true*, he would, not without reason, be *counted an enthusiast.*

Though *priests* be not allowed to pay the same regard to their credit, interest, or even subsistence, which all other men do without censure: yet, so long as they believe the Bible to be the word of God, they are bound in conscience to defend it; and why should they not be as much authorized, and as competent, to write on religion, and in defence of it, as other men are concerning their several professions?

Mr. P. professes to draw all his arguments against the Scriptures from the Scriptures themselves: yet his quotations

from ancient and modern enemies to christianity prove, that he would gladly have employed other weapons, had he known where to have found any that suited his purpose. But men of *greater learning and application* than he, are here at a loss: for the more the subject is calmly and solidly investigated, the fuller will be the proof, that "ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY "INSPIRATION OF GOD; and is profitable for doctrine, for re- "proof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto "all good works."

A

VINDICATION, &c.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

THE BOOKS OF MOSES.

MR. PAINE undertakes to *demonstrate*, that Moses did not write those books which are ascribed to him; and consequently that they are destitute of authority. They would not, however, be destitute of authority, though it were known that Moses did not write them: for they may be authentick records, even if penned by another author. Yet I am far from conceding this point: and having answered other objections, I shall give my reasons for believing, both that Moses wrote these books, and that he wrote them *under the immediate superintending inspiration of the Holy Spirit.*

The arguments by which Mr. P. endeavours to overturn the authority of these ancient records, are of two sorts: some more directly tend to shew, that Moses could not be the author of them; and others to prove them unworthy of God, and thus to fix a charge

of imposture on the writer, for delivering his doctrines and commands in the name of the Lord.—I shall begin with the former.

I. It is alledged, that Moses could not be the author; because the writer generally speaks *in the third person.* But what weight is there in this argument? Xenophon and Cæsar, admired writers among the Greeks and Romans, do the same when recording *their own actions:* and no scholar ever questioned the authenticity of their works on that account.—In Deuteronomy, however, Moses speaks principally *in the first person;* and Mr. P. finds great confusion in the arrangement of that book, and says it is *dramatical.** Whereas it is obvious, that the historian *records facts in the third person,* and *delivers exhortations in the first:* and the changes of person are only pauses of the speaker, giving an account of the occasion on which each speech was delivered, and of some coincident circumstances. Mr. P. must therefore have strange ideas of the *drama;* if he applies that term to a single speaker addressing the same audience, at different times, almost in the manner of a modern preacher!

No accurate student of the Bible needs to be informed, that the city *Laish* did not receive the name of *Dan*, till long after the death of Moses.† Yet it would be difficult to prove that no such place as Dan existed in the days of Abraham, in whose history that name occurs:‡ *Dan* signifies *judgment:* and perhaps

---

* P. ii. p. 7, 8. † Judg. xviii. 29.

‡ P. ii. p. 10—12. Gen. xiv. 14.

a city in those parts might be so called, because some person was stationed there to administer justice. Admitting however that Laish was meant; must we thence infer that Moses did not write the book of Genesis? Some transcriber, in after times, knowing that *Laish* was then commonly called *Dan*, might insert this name, as a note in a parenthesis, to render the history more intelligible: and this note might afterwards be continued instead of the text; either by mistake, or with the same intent for which it was inserted. Arguments must be very scarce with infidels; when this single word is brought forward with great parade and confidence, as if it contained a full demonstration, that the books of Moses were anonymous impostures!

It may perhaps be proper to inform some readers, that the *Bible*, and the *Bible-chronology* are entirely distinct: we contend that the former is the infallible word of God; we allow the latter to be the fallible calculations of learned men.*

No doubt some parts of the thirty-sixth chapter of Genesis were inserted long after the death of Moses.† The compiler of the books of Chronicles abridged several genealogies from Genesis; and he continued the list of names far beyond the times of Moses, in the latter part of the first chapter. In consequence, probably, some transcriber put these additions, to the genealogies in the thirty-sixth of Genesis, where they have stood to this day. Studious men have always been aware of the difficulty, and have attempted to

---

* P. ii. p. 10.

† P. ii. p. 12—14.

obviate it: and the *Age of Reason* has not shewn that any new solution is wanted.

The assiduity of infidels may perhaps hereafter discover a few more instances of the same kind: but instead of wondering, that such trivial variations have taken place in these ancient records; we may be astonished, they have been so well preserved, that the most acute criticks can discover no alteration of any importance to our faith and practice.

As king Zedekiah is spoken of in the second book of Chronicles, Mr. P. (taking it for granted that these books were written before the book of Genesis because the verses above mentioned were taken from the first book,) concludes that Genesis was not extant till after the captivity; and that *the first book* in the Bible was written three hundred years after Homer's Iliad.* He must mean the *first book in order*, not the most *ancient book:* for he allows David and Solomon to have written some part of the works ascribed to them.

But will any man seriously contend, on such slight grounds, that the books of Moses were penned after the captivity: when the whole religious system and civil polity of the Jews, for nearly one thousand years before, had been rested on those books; and all their other writers perpetually referred to them; as it is manifest from all the histories, Psalms, and prophecies of the Old Testament?

In fact, the line of David is in these books brought

---

* P. i. p. 32, 33.

down four generations lower than the time of Zerubbabel:* and if this too were written before the books of Moses; the Jews had not a written law till within about four hundred years before Christ! But at that time, the whole nation, by some unaccountable infatuation, was led to receive the works of an anonymous impostor as sacred books, which they and their fathers had always possessed, read, and obeyed, for above one thousand years; or at least, to allow that they had always suffered severe punishment, whenever they disregarded or disobeyed them!

Mr. P. does not seem to have made up his mind, as to the period, when he should allow the Jews to have been in actual possession of the books of Moses.† Such an explicit declaration would indeed subvert his cause: for it would be far easier to meet a direct charge, than vague and varying insinuations on the subject.

Moses lived till the Israelites had got possession of the countries, which had been governed by Sihon and Og, and he died on the borders of Canaan. Surely then he might write, that "the children of Israel did "eat manna till they came to a land inhabited;—they "did eat manna till they came to the borders of "Canaan."‡

The historian remarks, that "the man Moses was "meek above all men which were upon the face of "the earth." 'Therefore,' says Mr. P. 'Moses could 'not be the writer; for to boast of meekness is the re-'verse of humility, and a lie in sentiment.'—But

---

* 1 Chron. iii. † P. ii p. 32, 33. ‡ Numb. xii.

meekness in this connexion is opposed to an *irascible disposition;* and the meekness of Moses is mentioned as an aggravation of the offence committed by Aaron and Miriam, and as a reason of the Lord's interposition to plead his cause against them.* To speak truth of ourselves is not always vain-glorious boasting; nay, there are occasions, on which a man may mention his own meekness and gentleness in consistency with the deepest humility. Our Lord himself said "I am meek "and lowly in heart:" and, though infidels, who seem to think themselves exclusively warranted to proclaim their own virtues, may despise this remark; yet christians will reverence the example, and not wonder that Moses, having impartially recorded his own faults, should be led by the Holy Spirit to mention this excellency of his character.—Some indeed think, that a *blameable lenity* was intended, and others seem to admit that the words were inserted by another hand: but I see not the least occasion to have recourse to such suppositions; for the readiness with which Moses forgave the offenders, and the earnestness with which he prayed for Miriam, illustrate the account given of his unassuming and gentle disposition.

Mr. P. seems to think it self evident, that all accounts of giants must be fabulous; and consequently *that the Bible is a fable.*† But men are now sometimes seen considerably above eight feet high, and proportionably large; authentick histories mention those of a still greater size: and a well-attested relation,

---

* Exod. xvi. 35. † P. ii. p. 17.

of men ten or twelve feet high, would not be incredible; for none of our reasoning can shew this to be impossible.—A bedstead, fifteen or sixteen feet long, must have been needlessly long, and the disproportion must be ascribed to the ostentation of the king of Bashan.*—Even if Rabbah were never taken till the days of David, which cannot be proved: yet Moses might know, that the Ammonites had seized upon the bedstead of Og, or bought it of the Israelites, and reserved it as a curiosity in their capital city. But suppose the passage in question were added as a note many years afterwards; how does this invalidate the authenticity of the books of Moses?

The fourth commandment, as it stands in the fifth of Deuteronomy, varies from the original law written in the twentieth of Exodus: hence it is inferred that the writer of these books received his materials from tradition, or invented them himself.† But impostors do not admit such *apparent* inconsistencies, which may at all times be avoided with very little trouble: so that they are rather proofs of the writer's conscious integrity. In fact, Moses, when delivering a most impressive and pathetick exhortation, did not confine himself to the words which he had recorded as an historian. The people very well knew the original ground for hallowing the sabbath, in honour of the Creator: and he thought himself at liberty, to remind them of their obligations to JEHOVAH their Redeemer from Egyptian bondage, and of the humanity due to their

---

* Deut. iii. 11. † P. ii. p. 9.

bond servants: for this constituted another important reason for hallowing the sabbath. *Distinct* motives are not necessarily *inconsistent*. Mr. P. in writing his several pamphlets, might both aim to free mankind from *vulgar prejudices*, and to obtain celebrity for himself; and he might deem it proper on some occasions to insist on the one motive, and in different circumstances to bring forward the other, without being justly chargeable with inconsistency or self-contradiction.

Mr. P. cannot suppose any christian believes that Moses wrote the account of his own death and burial; and if he thinks, that none have attempted to account for the circumstance, of these events being recorded in the last chapter of Deuteronomy, his information must be very defective! Almost any of those expositors, against whom he declaims, though he certainly never consulted them, would have shewn him that he has made no new discoveries, and that the difficulty is far from insuperable.—Perhaps Joshua or Eleazar added this chapter, or it was taken from the authentick records of the nation at a later period; when the words, "no man knoweth his sepulchre to this day," were evidently subjoined.—The preceding history plainly implies, that Moses should *die;** and the concluding chapter records the accomplishment of these intimations. "Moses died—according to the word of the "Lord, and he buried him." Mr. P. cannot find the antecedent to *he* in this passage!!!†—If it be asked,

* Numb. xxvii. 13. Deut. iv. 21, 22. xxxi. 14. 16. 27. xxxii. 50.

† Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6.

how it was known that the Lord buried Moses? I answer, by immediate revelation; and a good reason may be assigned, why he should thus be buried: namely, lest the Israelites should idolize his relicks, as they did the brazen serpent, or as papists do the bones of the saints.

II. We now proceed to consider objections of another nature, and far more important; as being intended to prove the books of Moses in all respects unworthy of God.—Mr. P.* finds great fault with the history of the creation. 'It begins abruptly; it is nobody that 'speaks; it is nobody that hears; it is addressed to no-'body; it has neither first, nor second, nor third per-'son.' Does this passage contain either *reason* or common sense? The sacred writer first addresses the reader, and then he introduces the Creator speaking to the chaos, which promptly obeys his omnipotent commands. And in what does this differ from the manner of other historians except in simplicity and sublimity? For even *infidels* of taste will doubtless coincide with the *pagan* Longinus, in admiring the history of the creation as inimitably beautiful, after all Mr. P.'s endeavours to ridicule it: and we need but compare it with the whimsical absurdities of the other *world-makers* whom he mentions, to learn the difference between man's vain imaginations and the sure testimony of God.

Mr. P. attempts to *burlesque* the history of the fall, in subserviency to his grand design.† Let the serious

---

* P. i. p. 13. † P. i. p. 10, 11. 46. P. ii. 14.

reader however determine, whether the sacred writers borrowed their doctrine concerning the devil and his angels from pagan mythology; or whether these fables were distorted traditions concerning the fall of angels, decorated by the ingenuity of the poets.—The notion of Satan *warring* against the Almighty, who defeated him, is grounded on a passage in the Revelation of John;* which may *refer* to the fall of angels, and the opposition of fallen angels to the kingdom of Christ; but which directly *predicts* other events.—No doubt this book was written long after the fables of Jupiter and the giants, of Jupiter's casting Vulcan out of heaven, and of Pluto's reigning in Tartarus, were invented; but the doctrine of *fallen angels* was published in the Old Testament, many centuries before the date of these fables, and in all probability was known by tradition from the beginning.

The doctrine of Scripture on this subject must here be stated.—God created multitudes of angels, and endued them with noble powers and faculties: but, as they were moral and accountable agents, some of them revolted from their Creator, incurred his displeasure, lost the divine image of holiness, became malignant and desperate, and, as determined enemies, employed all their abilities in attempting to counteract his plans and to ruin his other creatures. Though "cast down "to hell, and bound in chains of darkness to the "judgment of the great day," so that it is impossible for them to escape eternal condemnation; yet they are

* Rev. xii. 7, 8.

permitted, under certain limitations, for a season, to shew their power and malice; as wicked men practise and prosper for a time.—Being united in one kingdom, under Satan or the Devil, every thing they do is frequently attributed to their leader; as generals are said to do those things, which they perform by the troops under their command: so that *omnipotence* or *omnipresence* is no more ascribed personally to the devil, than to Alexander or Cæsar. It is therefore a direct slander to affirm that 'christian divines give 'him a power equally great, or even greater, than they 'ascribe to the Almighty.' The sacred writers never represent Satan, as 'defeating the power and wisdom 'of God:' but as *permitted* to try and prevail against our first parents, to tempt their posterity, and to maintain his influence over wicked men, his *willing* servants; and even this will be over-ruled to the brighter display of the Lord's glory, the greater advantage of all his friends, and the deeper confusion of Satan and his adherents.

The Lord created the parents of our race in his *own image:* but though perfectly holy, they were not unchangeable; for immutability is an incommunicable divine perfection. As a test of their obedience, they were forbidden to eat of the fruit of one tree, and warned that in the day they ate of it they should surely die. The tempter however, concealing himself in the serpent, which is represented to have been a most beautiful and sagacious animal before this transaction, prevailed by his insinuations on Eve, and by her on Adam, presumptuously to violate this single easy restriction. Immediately they both became mortal, and

their future lives resembled a lingering execution. Their *spiritual life*, or *the holy image of God*, and capacity for happiness in his service and favour, was also extinct; and they became prone to sin, like the tempter to whom they had listened. And as they were created with immortal souls; the guilt they had contracted, with the crimes which they would be continually adding, must have ensured their final misery, had not mercy been vouchsafed through the promised Seed of the woman.

Nothing is easier than ridicule, to a man of a lively imagination, who is not restrained by any regard to piety or decorum. This transaction may be called, 'a 'tete-a-tete between the serpent and the woman:' 'the woman *in her longing* eating an apple:' 'the 'snake persuading her to eat an apple: and the eating 'of that apple damning all mankind.' But what is there in all this, except profaneness? Might not the Creator require some test of obedience and gratitude from his favoured creature, and some condition of further blessings? Could any thing be more easy, than this single instance of self-denial among a profusion of delights? And was not wilful and presumptuous disobedience, from unbelief, hard thoughts of God, sensual concupiscence, and ambition of independence, a most flagrant act of rebellion and ingratitude? For who can deny, that the easier the command, the more atrocious the violation of it? They, who vindicate or palliate such conduct, must have a very feeble sense of their obligations to God, whatever they argue about moral obligations among men.

But do all mankind deserve damnation for Adam's sin? Instead of answering such a bold interrogation,

I would only say, "Nay but, O man, who art thou "that repliest against God?" It is undeniable, that pain, sorrow, and death exist, and that men are prone to wickedness in every age and country. The greatest philosophers can give no satisfactory account, how the world was brought into its present deplorable condition; and the scriptural narration is at least as reasonableas any hitherto devised. Now if Adam by transgression became sinful and mortal, his whole posterity must fall *in* and *with* him; for every creature propagates its own nature and all its essential properties. Accordingly children are liable to pain, sickness, and death; and the state of the world accords exactly to the sentence denounced on Adam.* Children likewise shew precisely the same propensities to pride, envy, sensuality, and other corrupt passions, as appear more strongly marked in grown persons. If then all men actually sin and deserve punishment, if they be incapable of a holy felicity in the enjoyment of God, and if there be a future state of righteous retribution: they must be condemned *in consequence* of Adam's sin, unless mercy and grace deliver them. Would it not then better become us to leave these matters to a world of clearer light, and to employ ourselves in seeking mercy, and victory over our evil propensities, or in alleviating the miseries of mankind; than in disputing about what we do not understand, and ridiculing what we cannot disprove? Could it even be *demonstrated*, that the Mosaick account of the fall were

* Gen. iii. 16—19.

false; the wickedness and misery of our race would not be in the least diminished, and unrepented sin would surely expose men to the wrath of God. As to *infants* who die without actually transgressing the divine law; we are not bound to determine any thing about them, but may safely leave them in the hands of infinite justice and mercy.

The circumstance of Eve's not expressing wonder at the serpent's speaking, may be accounted for by the brevity of the narrative, and the extraordinary sagacity before observed in that animal; and by supposing with great probability, that Satan ascribed this gift bestowed on the serpent, to the salutary tendency of the forbidden fruit.

Mr. P. can clearly see the doctrine of *evil spirits* in the scriptures: and so far he is right. But as Satan's kingdom is the power of darkness, and as he is most successful when least suspected: it is not impossible but Mr. P. may be indebted for many of his brilliant thoughts to Satan's suggestions, especially 'such as 'bolt into the mind of their own accord;'* and that he may abundantly repay his obligations, even while he denies Satan's existence, by endeavouring to set men against the religion of Him, who "was manifest-"ed to destroy the works of the devil."

'Take away from Genesis,' says Mr. P. 'the be-'lief that Moses was the author, on which only the 'strange belief that it is the word of God hath stood; 'and nothing remains but an anonymous book of sto-

* P. i. p. 43.

'ries—absurdities, or—downright lies. The story of 'Eve and the serpent, and of Noah and his ark, drop 'to a level with the Arabian tales, without the merit 'of being entertaining; and the account of men living 'to eight or nine hundred years becomes as fabulous 'as the immortality of the giants.'—But is it not more wonderful, that God should at all destroy the work of his own hands, than that he should preserve his creatures for many hundred years?—Many traditions among the heathen confirm the account of the deluge, and learned men have discerned traces of it all over the earth.—The opinion of the divine inspiration of the book of Genesis is not supported, *only* or *principally*, by the opinion that Moses wrote it, but rests on other evidence.—This despised book contains the most satisfactory account of the creation, the entrance of sin, the origin of the nations dispersed through the earth, and the history of the remote ages, at this day extant in the world: with many most extraordinary prophecies, fulfilling at this day. And the story of Joseph, in the opinion of most competent judges, is the most pathetick and interesting that ever was related!

Mr. P. has given a fair specimen of his *candour* and *caution*, in his observations on the conduct of Moses and the Israelites, respecting the Midianitish women and children.—The Lord prohibited the Israelites to assault or distress the Moabites and Ammonites, with whom the Midianites were intimately connected:* yet Balak, king of Moab, when they ap-

* Deut. ii. 9—13.

proached his land, instead of sending an ambassador to desire peace, or openly making war upon them, sent for Balaam to curse them. When that project did not answer, he followed Balaam's counsel, and, by means of the Midianitish women, seduced the Israelites into fornication and then into idolatry, in order that they might provoke the Lord to curse them. In this diabolical design he so far succeeded, that twenty four thousand of them were cut off by divine judgments in one day. Moses was therefore commanded to avenge Israel, on the Midianites, who seem to have been most criminal: and twelve thousand Israelites were sent into the country of Moab and Midian, who were completely successful and did not so much as lose a single man. Mr. P. calls this a *plundering excursion*, though, even if Moses had acted by his own authority, the war would have been completely justifiable.

But after the return of the detachment with the spoil and prisoners, Moses ordered all the grown women to be put to death; and this excites most dreadful exclamations. The *sword of war* indeed should distinguish between armed opponents and those who make no resistance: but the *sword of justice* knows no such distinction. Deliberate insidious temptation to sin must appear, to all wise and virtuous men, the greatest of injuries. The sex of the culprit does not in other cases excuse guilt or exempt from punishment: and if the women, in defiance of modesty and decency, openly suffered themselves to be hired by the princes and priests of Baal, to become prostitutes to the Israelites, in order to promote idolatry, and to

bring guilt and wrath upon the worshippers of JEHOVAH; was it meet the tempters should escape with impunity, while the tempted were severely punished? The project of thus seducing Israel was reasonably adjudged the national sin of Midian and Moab: and was it proper the principal criminals should escape? Moses could not possibly know the individual transgressors; and the Lord commonly involves many in publick calamities who are not equally criminal: by his orders therefore the virgins were mercifully spared, and the rest were righteously punished.

But Mr. P. says, that an order was given to *debauch the daughters*, as well as to slay the mothers; and he calculates that thirty two thousand were thus consigned to debauchery!—If he could *prove* this, he would have an argument against the divine authority of the books of Moses, far more cogent than any he has hitherto produced: for a holy God may justly condemn transgressors to death, but he cannot command them to violate his own righteous laws.—But where did Mr. P. learn, that the Israelites were even *allowed* to debauch their female slaves? In fact the law of Moses did not permit a man to *marry* a captive, without many delays and previous formalities: and if afterwards he divorced her, he was bound to set her at liberty, "because he had humbled her."* And it is most certain that the passage referred to, compared with other Scriptures, implies nothing about *debauching* the female children, or even taking them as con-

* Deut. xxi. 10—14.

cubines; but merely of retaining them as slaves, educating them in their families, employing them in domestick services; and either incorporating them by marriage as proselytes with the Israelites, or marrying them to their servants.

It cannot, however, be denied, that the male children, as well as the grown women, were consigned to the slaughter: and was not this very dreadful? Certainly; and wicked too, if Moses did it of his own mind, and to gratify his own passions. But this coincides with another subject, which I shall here, once for all, fully consider: namely, the orders given and executed respecting the extirpation of the Canaanites and Amalekites.

Every one acquainted with logick must perceive, that all who make these orders an objection to the divine original of the Old Testament, argue completely in a circle, and beg the question. They *assume it as self-evident*, that the Lord could never command Moses or Joshua to destroy these nations: they next execrate them for doing such things without authority: and thence they infer that God never spake to mankind by such wicked persons. But should they not first of all *prove*, that the Judge of the world could not *justly* give these orders? Till this be done, all their inferences from a false or disputed principle must be false or disputable; and all their declamations, mere rhetorical arts of imposing on the understanding by appealing to the passions.

A judge may condemn a criminal to die, and an executioner may take away his life, without murder, or even injustice: yet if an unauthorized person should

put him to death, he would be a murderer.—Man is surely accountable to his Maker; wickedness merits punishment: and the supreme Judge may inflict *deserved* punishment in what manner he sees good. According to the Scripture, death is the execution of a righteous judgment denounced against men, as transgressors of the divine law: and a more rational account of our maladies and miseries, and of the triumph of death over the whole human species, has not yet been given. If then sinners die, because God inflicts death as a part of their merited punishment: the *justice* is precisely the same, whether the sword or disease fulfil the divine mandate. The Canaanites were sinners against the Lord exceedingly, and had filled up the measure of their crimes; who then will say, that He might not *justly* have destroyed them by pestilence, deluges, and earthquakes? Who will contend, that it would have been wicked in an angel to have executed the Creator's commission in cutting them off, as the army of Sennacherib was slain? And why might not the Lord select a nation, and, having sealed their commission by publick miracles, require them to extirpate an abominable race of men from the face of the earth?

The same objection might be made, with equal validity, though not so plausibly, against all the ways, by which God inflicts death upon mankind: We must therefore, either deny that God inflicts diseases and death, and by a species of practical atheism resolve every thing into chance or necessity; or blaspheme God as cruel and unjust; or else allow that he may execute criminals in what way he sees good. The di-

vine commission to Moses and Joshua must indeed be proved by other arguments: but these considerations completely invalidate *the objection*, and demonstrate that God might *justly* give them such orders. If it be urged that famines, earthquakes, and pestilences, though equally destructive, do not so much contradict men's notions of God; it may be answered, that "the "world by wisdom knew not God;" and pagan deities, as characterized by Greek and Roman authors, prove men's notions in this respect too fallible and absurd, to be in the least depended on.

'But wherein could crying or smiling infants of-'fend? To read without horror of their slaughter must 'undo every thing tender, sympathizing, or benevo-'lent in our nature: and the sacrifice I must make to 'believe the Bible would be sufficient *to determine* '*my choice.*'—*Unbelief is* then *the effect of choice*, not of unavoidable error or ignorance. But who can read of the ravages made by a conflagration, the miseries of famine and pestilence, or the desolations of an earthquake, without horror? Yet who disbelieves a well attested narrative of such events on that account? Or who, but an atheist, denies the justice of God in them?—The *execution of criminals* is calculated to excite horror, and not to gratify the finer feelings of benevolence: yet no declamation will convince a sober man that they are in all cases unnecessary, or that all concerned in them are sanguinary monster.—The aversion men feel to the scriptural history in this respect, above all other records of misery and bloodshed, arises from its opposition to the self-flattery of the human heart: for these awful executions militate

against their palliating notions concerning the evil of sin, and the demerit of despising and rebelling against God.

No doubt every humane heart revolts from the idea of slaughtering infants: yet infants die by thousands all over the world, with unspeakably more anguish, than a speedy undreaded death by the sword would occasion; and has not God the issues of life and death? Many a man who inherits an impaired estate, or a gouty constitution, sensibly feels, that children suffer in consequence of the crimes committed by their parents. Thus parents are punished in their children: and if the Lord sees good to prepare the souls of dying infants for heaven, and to receive them to himself; though the smiling or crying babes were supposed to have been as spotless as angels, they will not charge God with injustice or cruelty on account of their premature death, let who will on earth presume to arraign his conduct. Set aside the doctrine of original sin, allow pain and death to be the appointment of God, and deny the future happiness of infants dying without actual transgression; and I could declaim against the ordinary conduct of providence in this respect, with as much vehemence, and at least as much plausibility, as Mr. P. does against the Bible; had I no more reverence for the *works*, than he has for the *word* of God.

But if some great and important ends were answered, by the peculiar method in which the Lord punished the nations of Canaan: then the objection is not only removed; but the divine wisdom is illustrated, and a presumptive argument afforded that these books

are a revelation from God.—Who can deny that the world has been full of atrocious crimes in every age? Or who will say, that it does not become the Ruler of the universe to take effectual methods for the restraint of man's wickedness? If then the Canaanites were addicted to abominable idolatries and detestable lusts: if their altars reeked with human sacrifices, and their religious worship was connected with the most shameless impurities: it must have been peculiarly worthy of God, to inflict vengeance on them in a way as extraordinary as their crimes had been, and suited to produce durable and extensive effects on the surrounding nations. His powerful hand and awful justice, and the difference between Him and the idols of the heathen, would be rendered far more conspicuous in punishing them by the sword of his worshippers, than if he had desolated the land by earthquakes and inundations: for these are commonly ascribed to natural causes, and God is forgotten even in the midst of them. Thus the affecting solemnities of a *publick execution* are generally deemed more conducive to the ends of good government, than the *concealed punishment* of a criminal. But especially these transactions were calculated to warn the Israelites themselves, against the abominations which they were commissioned to punish: and if they did not fully answer that purpose, we must impute it to the strength of human depravity. The whole history throws immense light on the plan of divine government: it shews the malignity of sin, and proves that it will be punished far more severely than we naturally imagine: it teaches all, who reverence the Bible, to fear the wrath of God

and seek his mercy: and the beneficial effects of these temporary miseries, on all succeeding ages and nations, exceed all calculation; while the whole number, that perished, bears no more proportion to the vast multitudes who have profited by their doom, than the few criminals who suffer under the mildest government, do to the nation, that is thus preserved in peace and good order.

"The earth is the LORD's and the fulness of it." Surely, then, he had a right to bestow that proportion of it on his worshippers, which the Canaanites had forfeited by their crimes! The Israelites did not come by stealth to take possession of it; but had long before avowed their purpose, and the grant of it which they had received from JEHOVAH.

Those of the inhabitants who submitted were treated with clemency: and from these examples we may infer, that others might have been spared, if they had not hardened their hearts in impenitent defiance of God. Had the infants alone been preserved; they must either have been retained in the most rigorous bondage, or lived to perpetuate the bloody contest. The women were in general as criminal as the men: and if there were exceptions, the righteous Judge would discriminate properly in another world; though national judgments, however executed, make not these exact distinctions.

If Israel, by these severities, contracted a ferocious spirit, which they gratified on other occasions; they proportionably disregarded the law given them, which required love to neighbours, strangers, and enemies; and, the case of the devoted Canaanites excepted, pre-

scribed rules for war, at least as equitable and mild as those of any heathen nation.* And it should be noted, that the just notions of modern times, and even those of infidels, respecting clemency towards enemies, originated not with the admired Greeks and Romans; but with christians, who learned them from the Scriptures: so that when christian princes were known in the world, more humane sentiments on these subjects soon began to be adopted.

The credit given to the Bible is often ascribed to the prejudices of education. But though an obscure individual, I feel impelled to declare, that I once was not much more disposed to believe the Scriptures than Mr. P.: and having got rid of the shackles of education, was much flattered by my emancipation and superior discernment. Yet nearly thirty years, employed in diligently investigating the evidences and contents of the Bible, have produced in me an unshaken assurance that it is the word of God.

The most remote shadow of a proof cannot be produced, that Moses carried on war under pretence of religion. He made no proselytes by the sword: and neither he, nor any other person mentioned with approbation in Scripture, made war on any neighbouring nation because they were idolaters. If any man pretend to draw the conduct of Moses, in the case of Midian, or of Joshua in that of the Canaanites, into precedent; let him work such miracles and produce such credentials as they did; till that be done, Mr. P.

---

* Numb. xx. 14—21. Deut. xx. 10—14.

has my free consent to pour fourth against him that torrent of indignant reproach, which he hath unjustly bestowed on some of the most excellent characters, that ever appeared in the world.

Mr. P. most virulently reprobates the law, which condemns the stubborn and rebellious son to be stoned:* yet that law contained much wisdom and mercy under its apparent severity. The parents were the only prosecutors; and as both of them must concur, natural affection would effectually prevent the frequent execution of the penalty denounced: and indeed we do not read a single instance of the kind, in the whole subsequent history. If, however, such an extraordinary event at any time occurred; it could not fail to excite general attention, and to produce immense effects on the minds both of parents and children: so that the solemn execution of one incorrigible criminal would be a salutary warning to tens of thousands. The very existence of such a law would increase the authority of parents, and give energy to their admonitions; as well as fortify the minds of young persons against the enticements of bad company, and other temptations. Thus it would powerfully tend to *prevent wickedness;* the great end proposed by every wise legislator!

It would likewise be a perpetual monitor to parents, not improperly to indulge their children; to establish their authority by salutary correction in their tender years; to watch over them, and give them good instructions; to check the first buddings of vice, to set

* Deut. xxi. 18—21.

them a good example, and to pray for them without ceasing. These must have been the effects of this law, on all who duly attended to it: and we may learn similar lessons from the *spirit* of the statute, though it be now obsolete: for the Law-giver is unchangeable.

The prosecution was not allowed merely for *stubbornness*, but for *obstinate persevering rebellion against parental authority, contempt of correction, gluttony, and drunkenness;* crimes destructive to families and communities. These offences must be so fully proved, as to induce the elders to condemn and execute the criminal: and their authority would secure every innocent person against the hasty rage, or the deliberate malice, of those few parents, who were capable of such desperate wickedness as the murder of their own children.—This law therefore, so harmless and beneficial in its operations, yet so contrary to human policy, rather proves than invalidates the divine original of the book, in which it is contained: though it do not at all coincide with *modern notions*, which, rushing from one extreme to another, directly tend to dissolve all obligations to submission, either to human or divine authority.

Whether priests are fond of preaching from Deuteronomy or not, we know that our Lord answered all Satan's suggestions by quotations from it; and the tempter may therefore be supposed to have a peculiar dislike to this book. The heart-searching God alone can *know*, whether the *desire of tithes*, or *the love of souls*, excites the minister's diligence; but, after all Mr. P.'s ridicule of "the ox treading out the grain;"

such ministers, as answer the emblem of that most laborious, tractable, and useful animal, will certainly deserve, and need not to fear but they will receive, a suitable provision, while the Lord has work for them; whatever may become of tithes and establishments.

And now, what do all these objections against the books of Moses amount to, when stripped of the wit, ridicule, and declamation, with which they are exhibited? The writer generally speaks of himself in the third person: a very few instances occur, in which a trifling alteration has been made in the text, during a course of above three thousand years: an account of the death and burial of the author is subjoined: events are recorded, which seem to us improbable, because contrary to our general observation: actions were done, by the *command of God*, which *without that command* would have been unjust: and laws are given, which do not coincide with modern notions, concerning government and parental authority. These *frivolous objections* are called *demonstrations;* and the author supplies his want of argument, by declaiming against Moses, and against impostors and priests, with peculiar vehemence and acrimony!

It now remains to state briefly the grounds on which we maintain the divine superintending inspiration of Moses; as well as that he was the writer of the books that bare his name, excepting the very few passages which have been mentioned.—The books in question give plain intimations to that effect. "Moses "wrote all the words of the Lord:—and he took the "book of the covenant, and read in the audience of

"the people."* "And it came to pass, that when "Moses had made an end of writing the words of "this law in a book, *until they were finished*,—He "commanded the Levites, saying, take this book of "the law, and put it in the sides of the ark, that it may "be a witness against thee."†—Reference to the law, *written* by Moses, is continually made in the subsequent books of Scripture. The testimony of all antiquity, Jews and pagans; with that of the whole christian church, and their avowed enemies the modern Jews, concur in ascribing these books to Moses; and even this testimony, from time immemorial, requires something more forcible to invalidate it, than a few stale objections which have been repeatedly answered. How could such an unanimous opinion have prevailed in the world, if there had been no foundation for it! If it did not originate with the publication of these books, at what time could it have been introduced? Is it possible that the whole nation of Israel should have been persuaded by an anonymous impostor, that they had for ages past been governed by laws, and conversant in histories, which they had never before seen? If the rulers and a large majority, from selfish motives had attempted such a barefaced imposition, would not some opponents have risen up, and two parties been formed?—However the minority had for a time been run down at home, would not other ages have heard of it? And if some received these books as genuine, would not others have rejected them as

---

* Exod. xxiv. 4—7. † Deut. xxxi. 24—26.

spurious? Indeed it is too late for a man to attempt disproving any books having been written by the person whose name they have certainly born for above two thousand years, with almost the unanimous consent of all mankind.

The history contained in these books is confirmed by the most ancient records of the pagan world, and even by the fables of the poets, and has every mark of authenticity. The view given in them of the perfections, works, and government of God, is in all respects most rational and sublime; and as much excels all that pagans have written on those subjects, as the sun outshines a taper. The *moral* law, the sum of which is, "love God with all thy heart;" and love "thy neighbour as thyself," is perfectly "holy, just, "and good;" but no Gentile ever gave such a delineation of man's duty. The *judicial* laws will be found wise, equitable, and beneficial, in proportion as they are considered attentively, and are well understood. The *ceremonial* institutions were not only ordinances of divine worship, and barriers against idolatry, but evident types and shadows of good things to come; and as such, a kind of prophecy, the exact accomplishment of which is a full proof of their divine original.

The miracles wrought by Moses were of such a nature, that they could not be counterfeited: millions, both of friends and enemies, were appealed to as eye witnesses: and if they had not been actually performed, by the person who wrote the books in which they are recorded; when and how could it have been possible to persuade the whole nation of Israel, that they

and their forefathers had always believed them? And if they were wrought by Moses, they prove both the authenticity and divine inspiration of his writings: for he continually declares that he spake, wrote, and acted by divine authority.

The prophecies contained in these books, which have been exactly fulfilled, evince the same truth. Regardless of ridicule, I still venture to maintain, that the first promise, of the seed of the woman, is a most astonishing prediction; not only of the crucifixion and triumphs of Christ, but of the persecutions, supports, and victories of the church, in every age of the world. The prophecy of Noah, concerning the descendants of Canaan, has received a most wonderful accomplishment in the history of mankind to this present day. The blessings pronounced by Jacob on his sons were evident predictions, verified by the event; especially that of the sceptre not departing from Judah till Shiloh came. Balaam's predictions have been wonderfully fulfilled, especially in the dominion of the Macedonians and Romans over the countries once possessed by the Assyrians and Hebrews. And the state of the Jews to this day is prophetically described in two remarkable passages.*

Finally the testimony of our Lord and his apostles, who always refer to these books, as written by Moses, and as the *scriptures*, the *oracles of God*, the *law of* God, fully confirms them both as genuine, and as divinely inspired; with all those who duly reverence

* Lev. xxvi. Deut. xxviii.

the testimony of Christ. So that every evidence, that proves the truth of christianity, confirms also the divine authority of the Old Testament in general, and of the books of Moses in particular.

And now, what are all Mr. P.'s boasted *demonstrations*, that these books are spurious; compared with this body of evidence, thus compendiously stated, that they are genuine and divine? If *his* cause had not more to recommend it to the hearts of ungodly men, than to the understandings of sober diligent enquirers; no believer need trouble himself to answer him: but all those (alas, how numerous are they!) who are not willing to part with their sins, and lead a godly life, wish to disbelieve the Scriptures, either wholly or in part; and I do not think, that any man ever thoroughly desired to part with all his sins, and to get rid of the Bible at the same time.

CHAP. II.

The Historical Books of the Old Testament.

JOSHUA.

IN prefacing this book some years since, I observed, that, 'It is not certain who was the penman:—but it 'is probable that the substance of it was written by 'Joshua: though several passages appear to have been 'added after his decease; perhaps by Phinehas, or 'some other person, who was employed in connect-'ing the *memorials* that he left behind him.'* The *book of Jasher* contained or constituted a part of these memorials: for it seems to have been a collection of records and poems, made at the time when the events happened.

No doubt part of the book of Joshua was written after his death, and that of the elders who outlived him: and if Samuel, or some later prophet, compiled the whole of it in its present form from the records of Israel, how does this deduct from its authenticity, or invalidate its divine authority?—It is certainly very ancient: and the person who compiled it, testifies that Joshua wrote some part of it in the book of the law of God, and also attests that the *written law* was extant in his days.† The book of Jasher was appealed

---

* Family-Bible. † Josh. xxiii. 6. xxiv. 26.

to for the truth of the facts recorded in it; which sufficiently proves that such memorials existed and were well known, when it was published.—The Jews have in every age considered it as an authentick part of their Scriptures, and preserved it with most scrupulous care. Joshua is repeatedly mentioned with approbation in the New Testament: and the book is quoted in a manner which both authenticates the history, and honours it as the word of God:* and thus it is proved to be authentick and divine, by all the evidence which establishes the New Testament.

Horace a man of great genius and good sense, published an ode, in which he gloried that his fame would be celebrated to the end of the world: and Mr. P. repeatedly speaks of his own fame as celebrated on both sides of the Atlantick: yet the book of Joshua must be rejected as spurious, because the writer speaking of Joshua says, that "his fame was noised through all "that country!" The only reason of this conclusion seems to be, that Joshua referred all the glory to the LORD God of Israel.

Joshua, as commander of Israel, meditated an attack on Jericho; when one in human form, with a drawn sword in his hand, accosted him, declaring himself to be Captain of the LORD's host. Joshua could not but know who this was; for he knew whom he served as the leader of the armies of Israel: he therefore fell on his face and worshipped him, as one who waited to receive his orders. He was then direct-

* Josh. i. 5. Heb. xiii. 5.

ed, according to the customs of those times, "to "loose his shoe from off his foot," as Moses had done when JEHOVAH appeared to him in the bush; and he obeyed.—'And what then?' says Mr. P. 'Nothing; here ends the story and the chapter too.'*—Here ends the *chapter*, it is true, and the division of the chapters is here peculiarly injudicious; but who does not know that the division of the Bible into chapters and verses is comparatively a modern arrangement?—The *story*, however, proceeds. And the reader is first informed of the situation of Jericho: then the Captain of the Lord's host, now called JEHOVAH, promises to deliver Jericho into Joshua's hands, and gives him directions in what manner to conduct the assault: and Joshua following those directions, is completely successful.† The appearance of JEHOVAH *in human form* is not particular to this place:‡ and Mr. P. is not mistaken, in condemning as idolatry, the honour on this occasion paid to him who appeared as man, if he were not also God. I shall, however, leave the Socinians to answer this on their principles; for such passages create no difficulties to those, who believe the doctrines of the Trinity, and of Christ's eternal Deity.

It might have been expected that this champion of infidelity would ridicule the miracle of the sun standing still at the command of Joshua: but wit and humour are not arguments; and a descant on the sublime and the ridiculous does not prove the thing im-

---

* Note, Part ii. p. 34, 35. † Josh. v. 13—15. vi.

‡ Gen. xviii. xxxi. xxxii. 24—30. Hos. xii. 3—5. John i. 1. 3.

possible. The actual suspension of the earth's diurnal motion would be infinitely easier to omnipotence, than stopping a ship under sail would be to the mariners: and if done gradually, it would occasion no more difference to the inhabitants. We cannot reasonably expect that authentick pagan history should confirm such an event; but some traces of it are supposed discoverable in Herodotus: and the fable of Phaeton, for one day driving the chariot of the sun, with the confusion which he occasioned, seems a plain intimation, that one day had occurred, unlike all that had preceded or followed it. The suspension of the earth's diurnal motion must make the moon also *appear* to stand still, if visible as it often is in the day-time: and if Joshua had been introduced, speaking in the language of the Newtonian philosophy, the argument against the antiquity of the book would have been far more plausible, than it now is. Should any deny that God *could* work such a miracle; it is sufficient to answer, "Ye do err, not knowing—the power of God." If any say, that he would not on such an occasion, I enquire, "Who hath known the mind of the LORD? "or who hath been his counsellor?"

JUDGES.

This book is repeatedly referred to in the New Testament, as a part of the Jewish Scriptures:* so that the proofs of the divine inspiration of the New

* Acts xiii. 20. Heb. xi. 32.

Testament also prove, that though *anonymous* it is not *without authority*. Probably it was compiled from the records of the times, by Samuel, or under his inspection.—The writer of this book expressly asserts that Jerusalem had been taken by Judah, before Adonibezek was brought thither:* and Mr. P. as expressly contradicts him!† It appears however from several passages, that the men of Judah had taken and burned Jerusalem: but that the Jebusites kept possession of some part of it, probably the hill of Zion; and that they were not expelled till the time of David.‡ Mr. P. supposes the book of Judges to have been written soon after that time: and should this be granted him, how does it invalidate the authenticity of the history contained in it? There is allowedly some difficulty in the chronology of the Judges; yet learned men have been able to settle that matter with tolerable clearness. But how a difficulty of this kind, in a *single book of such high antiquity*, can 'prove the uncertain and fa-'bulous state of the Bible,' does not appear to men of common capacity.‖

RUTH.

Mr. P. thinks this a bungling story; but very good judges have thought otherwise. Ruth was not a *strolling girl;* but a woman who had been married nearly ten years, and had been long approved as a vir-

---

* Judg. i. 4—8. † P. ii p. 22, 23.
‡ Josh. xv. 63. Judg. i. 1—8. 21. 2 Sam. v. ‖ P. ii. p. 12.

tuous widow. It is very unfair to judge the conduct of persons, who lived so long ago, by modern usages; especially as an occasion of traducing the Bible. In fact Ruth's conduct was approved by all concerned in the transactions, and her character was declared to be unexceptionable. The unaffected simplicity and piety of Boaz and his reapers are worthy of admiration and imitation. The Book is replete with important instruction; and it contains the genealogy of David and of Christ, which is referred to in the New Testament.

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL.

Mr. P.'s argument, by which he proves that the whole of these books was not written by Samuel, is absolutely conclusive: for the greatest part of the events recorded in them happened after his death. But it will by no means follow that *they are destitute of authority;* for this circumstance is altogether insufficient to preponderate against the testimony of the Jewish nation for above two thousand years at least; together with that of Christ and his apostles in the New Testament, and with the internal evidence of their authenticity and divine inspiration.

When Samuel was raised up to be the judge of Israel, a new epoch commenced: and the history of the two kings, whom he anointed, forms a crisis as it were, between the government by judges and the full establishment of hereditary monarchy. For this reason perhaps these books, as containing an account of the revolution in which Samuel had so great a share,

were called by his name.—The titles given to the books of Scripture are not supposed to be of divine authority: so that perhaps these were improperly called the books of Samuel, and the name, given them in the Septuagint and vulgate, of the first and second books of Kings, is more suitable. Probably Nathan and Gad, or other prophets in the days of David and Solomon, compiled them from the original records. The history contained in them has every mark of authenticity; they coincide with many of the Psalms, and with other parts of Scripture which refer to them; and they are replete with most important instruction.

Saul and his servant indeed cannot be justified, as to the manner in which they purposed to consult Samuel: but surely the Bible is not chargeable with the faults, which it records without approbation.* The verse relative to the word SEER was doubtless added afterwards as an explanatory note.†—Mr. P. says, 'many senseless and broken passages are found in the 'Bible;'‡ for instance, "Saul reigned one year; and "when he had reigned two years, he chose him two "thousand men."‖ This, however, may fairly mean, that Saul reigned one year before any thing remarkable happened; but after he had *reigned two years*, or in *second year of his reign*, according to the Hebrew idiom, the subsequent events took place. Such remarks can only be made, in order to prejudice superficial readers against the Scriptures.

---

* P. ii. p. 23, 24.
† 1 Sam. ix. 9.
‡ Note, P. ii. p. 34.
‖ 1 Sam. xiii. 1.

Saul had executed the command of God by Samuel, in slaying even the women and children of Amalek: but, probably from *respect to royalty*, he had spared Agag, whose "sword had made women "childless." In this single instance, Samuel, who had long acted as chief magistrate of Israel, exercised *apparent severity;* "he hewed Agag in pieces before the "Lord:" and hatred of prophets renders Mr. P. such an humane friend to kings, that he reprobates his impartial conduct in the most virulent manner!*

Mr. P. endeavours to prove, that the writer of these books contradicts himself; because Saul did not recollect David, when he returned from slaying Goliath.†—But David was very young when he stood as a musician before Saul. He indeed became Saul's armour-bearer, but it does not appear that he entered on actual service; nor is it said that Abner had any acquaintance with him. Saul's mind was disordered, and his affairs in much confusion. Kings, especially such kings as Saul, are approached and served by so many fresh faces, that they are apt *literally* to forget their old acquaintance. Some years seem to have elapsed, from the time when David left court, to his appearance in a shepherd's dress before Saul in the army. Young persons alter greatly in a little time: yet Saul spake as if he had some confused knowledge of him; so that the charge is hardly plausible.

Mr. P.'s eloquent harangue against the 'callous in-'difference and stubbornness of priests,' contains no

---

* P. ii. p. 60—63. 1 Sam. xv.

† Note, P. ii. p. 51. 1 Sam. xvi. xvii.

argument against the divine authority of the Scriptures.* The true minister of Christ will not wish to escape reviling from the man, who calls the Bible a *blasphemous fraud.* Doubtless numbers will find their minds *tranquillized* by Mr. P.'s labours; for they will help sinners to shake off all fear of wrath, to indulge a haughty self-important spirit, and to vindicate their impiety and rebellion against God. They will in all respects operate, as the insinuation of the serpent, "Ye shall not surely die," did on the mind of Eve: but should such persons at last find themselves fatally deceived, they will not very agreeably own their obligations to this *humane deist*, at the day of judgment, and in the eternal world.

KINGS AND CHRONICLES.

Mr. P. says, 'the Jewish kings were in general *a* '*parcel of rascals.*' I suppose he meant to include the kings of Israel: but they were not *Jewish* kings. The kings of Israel were indeed universally apostates from the law and instituted worship of God; and no one of them receives a good character from the sacred historian: and therefore I have no objection to this language being applied to them.—The tyranny and persecution of the house of Ahab had been so detestable; that if a Brutus had stabbed any of them, or a modern convention had doomed them to the scaffold, their patriotism would have been applauded: but when God

---

* P. ii. p. 25, 26.

employed Jehu to execute vengeance on them, it becomes murder and assassination!*

Mr. P. considers the seventy descendants of Ahab as *smiling infants;* but they were in general grown men; and they were slain by the elders of Jezreel, who had been the instruments of Jezebel's tyranny, in the murder of Naboth and his sons. We have, however, no more occasion to vindicate Jehu's character, in justifying the conduct of the Lord, who employed him to punish the family of Ahab, and gave him a temporal recompence; than we have to insist on the virtue of the executioner, in justifying the punishment of a murderer.—The Bible is no more answerable for the cruelties recorded in it with marked disapprobation; than Mr. P. is for the cruelty of that party in the French convention, whose conduct he justly execrates. The severities inflicted by the Israelites on the inhabitants of Canaan, many centuries before, cannot be proved to have been the source of those wars, which were carried on between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah: for the relative situation of these kingdoms might account for them; and such bloody contests have continually taken place in other countries, in similar circumstances, though they never read or heard of the Bible.

Mr. P. finds but seventeen kings and one queen in Judah, from the death of Solomon to the captivity: I suppose he omits Jehoahaz and Jeconiah. Of the remaining seventeen, eleven died natural deaths; three

* P. ii. p. 25—27.

were slain in battle; and three were slain by their own servants, none of whom succeeded to the throne. Athaliah, one of the most detestable of usurpers and murderers, was put to death by Jehoiada.—From the accession of David to the captivity, the kingdom of Judah was continued in one family, by lineal descent from father to son, except as the sons of Josiah reigned in succession. This was a space of almost five hundred years, in which there was not a single revolution or civil war, and only one short interruption. Perhaps it would be difficult to find any thing, in universal history, equal to this permanent order and regularity. How many revolutions, usurpations, murders of reigning kings by rivals and subjects, changes in the succession, and civil wars carried on with savage cruelty, are found in the history of England, within the last five hundred years? Yet who thinks this a sufficient reason for reviling the English nation?

The reigns of David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah, amount together to three hundred and thirteen years; to which we may add the former part of Jehoash's reign, during the life of Jehoiada:* and the greatest part of this time was evidently passed, either in profound peace, or in remarkable prosperity. Let then any impartial man compare the state of Judah, from the accession of David to the death of Josiah, with the same term of years in the history of Greece, or Rome; and he will be constrained to admit, that the condition of Judah was unspeakably most desirable.

---

* 2 Kings xiii.

The nation of Israel acted inconsistently with their peculiar advantages, as the chosen people of God; and their crimes are assigned in Scripture, as the reason of their numerous calamities. Indeed they were neither chosen for their *merit*, nor on their *own account* exclusively; but from the wise and holy love and mercy of God, and for the purposes of his own glory, in the benefit of other ages and nations, especially in introducing the gospel and kingdom of his beloved Son. The wickedness of this favoured people, in direct opposition to the requirements of their law, decisively proves the depravity of human nature: and he, who *impartially* compares the history of Israel with that of other nations, will find that they were not more wicked, nor indeed so wicked by far, as many have been and are at this day. But the crimes of *idolators* are concealed or excused; while those of *God's worshippers* are painted in the most horrid colours that ingenuity and eloquence can furnish, and aggravated by many palpable misrepresentations!

Mr. P. asserts that 'the genealogy from *Adam* to '*Saul* takes up the first nine chapters of Chronicles:' when in fact the descendants of David to four generations after Zerubbabel are found in the third chapter; and the succession of the high priests till the captivity in the sixth chapter, besides other matters of the same kind! This would be unworthy of notice, did it not shew that the author is not so competent to his undertaking, as many readers may suppose him. He considers the book of Chronicles as a repetition of the books of Kings: and others speak of them in the

same manner. But an attentive examination of them must convince any man, that this is erroneous: for the second book of Chronicles contains the history of Judah only, and of the kings that succeeded David till the captivity; and it gives a more copious and methodical account of them than is found in the books of Kings. The latter, from the division of the nation into two kingdoms, resemble an history of France and England carried on together, with continual transitions from one to the other. The former is like the history of England apart, in which the affairs of France are only mentioned, when connected with those of England.

What then shall we think of a man, who charges two historians with being impostors and liars, because they do not exactly relate the same events? Had they written the history of the same kingdom, they might surely have had the liberty to select, according to their different views, the peculiar facts which they would record: for no historian can record every thing that happens. But their histories relate to distinct subjects, and the writer of Chronicles had nothing immediately to do with the affairs of Israel. He who undertakes to write the annals of England, is not bound to relate the extraordinary measures and edicts of the French convention: and should some author in future times on this ground assert, that 'the historians of England and France did not believe one 'another, they knew each other too well:' the observation would not greatly recommend his candour and penetration.

The history of Jeroboam and his altar belonged to the affairs of Israel: but had the historian of Judah deemed it false, he would probably have contradicted it. The extraordinary prophecy, however, connected with it, which Josiah above three hundred years after, exactly accomplished in the view of the whole nation, sufficiently authenticates the narrative, in the judgment of all sober men. The actions of Elijah and Elisha also belonged to the history of Israel; for neither of them resided or prophesied in Judah. The writer of Chronicles, however, would not have declined recording the translation of Elijah, or the miracles of Elisha, had they fallen within his plan, lest he should be accused of lying and romancing: for he relates facts equally marvellous; such as the slaughter of Sennacherib's army by an angel, and the retrogarde motion of the shadow on the dial of Ahaz, at Hezekiah's request.

Some difficulty occurs in reconciling the dates given in different places, of the time when Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat began to reign: but similar difficulties occur in many other ancient histories. Perhaps Jehoram was admitted to a share in the regal authority before he succeeded to the kingdom at his father's death; as Solomon had been before him: or perhaps some trivial error in a numeral letter has taken place, by the inadvertency of transcribers.

The historians could not properly speak of the several prophets who lived in the times of which they wrote, further than they had some concern in publick affairs. But in general they mention the prophets with pe-

culiar respect; and uniformly ascribe the calamities of Judah and Israel to the conduct of the rulers and people in despising and persecuting them, and in hearkening to the false prophets who contradicted them.—Mr. P. says, 'the name of Jonah is mentioned on account of the restoration of a track of land by Jeroboam.'* The passage referred to is this: "Jeroboam "the son of Joash, restored the coast of Israel,—according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, "which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, "the son of Amittai, the prophet which was of Gath-"hepher."†—This is surely a very honourable mention of Jonah as a servant of the Lord, and a prophet whose predictions had been signally accomplished: whereas an inattentive reader would have supposed from Mr. P.'s account, that Jonah had only been named as concurring in some civil transaction.

Upon the whole, as far as the historians and prophets are capable of honouring each other, they certainly do it.—And did not brevity forbid, it would be easy to prove, from the prophecies contained in these books, and evidently accomplished, and from the New Testament; that they not only contain authentick history, taken from the records of Judah and Israel; but were written under the superintending inspiration of the Holy Spirit; for they certainly were contained in those Scriptures, which our Lord declared "must be "fulfilled," "and could not be broken;" and of which

---

* Note, P. ii. p. 31.

† 2 Kings xiv. 25.

Paul declares that they all "were given by inspiration "of God."*

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

Probably Ezra himself compiled the books of Chronicles, or the greatest part of them, from the publick records of the nation, and other books to which he appeals as his authority: and if he chose to begin the history of the Jews, subsequent to the captivity, with the same words that closed his preceding narrative, it might most reasonably be ascribed to a scrupulous regard to accuracy.

Mr. P. speaks of Ezra and Nehemiah, as if they returned *together with the first Jews from Babylon;* and he says that 'the book of Ezra was written im-'mediately after, or about five hundred and thirty-six 'before Christ, and Nehemiah was another of the re-'turned persons, who wrote an account of the *same* '*affair.*' But in fact Ezra did not return till nearly eighty years after the decree of Cyrus, according to the ablest chronologers: and it is evident by *his own account*, that the temple, after many delays was completed some time before he arrived at Jerusalem.—Nehemiah returned thirteen years afterwards; he continues his narrative from the conclusion of Ezra's history, and relates none *of the same events.* So ill informed is this writer, as to the contents of that volume he undertakes to invalidate!—The difference between

* 2 Tim. iii. 16.

the amount of those enrolled in families, and the number of the whole company, could not be *a mistake* of Ezra; and no impostor would have left so barefaced an error, if it were one. But the surplus might be Jews or Israelites, who were not able to prove their genealogies: and probably Ezra inserted the register, made at their first return from captivity, from the publick records, without any alteration.

But the register in Nehemiah has greater difficulties. The narrative leads one to expect, that a new enrolment would be made of the Jews residing at that time in Judea: but instead of this, the old register of those who returned with Zerubbabel is inserted, with some variations; and the same sum total is mentioned, though the several sums amount to thirty-one thousand and eighty-nine.* I firmly believe Nehemiah's history to be authentick and divine; but we are not authorized to expect miracles to prevent the unessential mistakes of transcribers. I therefore suspect that, by some means or other, an incorrect copy of the first register was here substituted, instead of the new register made by Nehemiah. A very slight acquaintance with critical learning will convince any candid man, that such variations in ancient authors may generally be discovered; and that they produce no uncertainty in the great outlines of the events recorded by them. But I think it better fairly to own the difficulty, than to pass it over in silence, or to give an answer which does not satisfy my own mind. It is however a sin-

---

* Ezra ii. Neh. vii.

gular instance; and in my judgment, does not weigh a grain in counterpoise against the weight of evidence in the opposite scale.

Mr. P. seems to allow that Ezra and Nehemiah wrote the books ascribed to them; but he says they are nothing to us.* He here forgets that the prophecy of Jeremiah was extant when the book of Ezra was written, and that the events recorded by Ezra were a *declared accomplishment of his predictions.*† This is surely of some consequence in the argument. And we may add, that these two books so constantly refer to all the preceding parts of Scripture, that they conclusively prove the whole to have been then extant, and received by the Jews as authentick records of divine authority. If then Ezra and Nehemiah wrote these books soon after the captivity, we may confidently infer, that the writings of Moses, and all the historical part of the Old Testament, (except Esther,) were received by the whole Jewish nation, as a divine revelation, at least five hundred years before the birth of Christ.

ESTHER.

Mr. P. says, 'if Madam Esther thought it any ho-'nour to offer herself as a kept mistress to Ahasuerus,' &c.‡ Now where did he learn that she thus *offered* herself to be a kept mistress to the king? I apprehend that she was not put to her choice whether she would enter Ahasuerus's seraglio or not. Such insinuations

---

* P. ii. p. 35. † Ezra i. 1. ‡ P. ii. p. 37.

too much resemble the conduct of *hypocritical priests*, who say, 'if the people choose to be deceived, let 'them be deceived.'—The book itself has this proof of authenticity, that the Jews to the present day observe the feast of *Purim*, in remembrance of the wonderful deliverance, which God vouchsafed them by means of Esther and Mordecai.

CHAP. III.

From Job to Solomon's Song.

JOB.

MR. P. speaks respectfully of this book,* but tries to prove it to be of gentile extraction. It coincides, however, so entirely with the other Scriptures, in the doctrine of human depravity, of the impossibility of any man justifying himself before God, of the Redeemer that would stand at the latter day upon the earth, of a future resurrection, and the presumption of our reasonings concerning the works and ways of God; that it accords with no other gentile book: and it must either be explained away as a fabulous drama, or Mr. P. and his friends will not long retain their respect for it.

The word *Satan*, he says, is not mentioned in the Bible, except in Job. The reader may see the *accuracy* of this observation by turning to the passages referred to!† But *this* appears still more fully in his observation, that *Pleiades*, *Orion*, and *Arcturus* are Greek names; and that the Jews were so ignorant of

---

* P. i. p. 28. P. ii. 37, 38.

† 1 Chron. xxi. 1. Ps. cix. 6. Zech. iii. 1, 2.

astronomy, that they had no words answerable to them. The learned reader will know, that no such words occur in the Hebrew Bible; and the unlearned may be assured that the original word for *Arcturus* is *Hus*, that for *Orion* is *Chesil*, and that for *Pleiades*, *Kima*.*

In order to calumniate the Jews, the heathens are said 'to be a just and moral people, not addicted to 'cruelty and revenge.' What heathens are meant I know not: but the writers of the Greeks and Romans, and of every other nation whose histories are extant, represent mankind in a very different light. Romances about just and moral nations, not addicted to cruelty and revenge, may be found; but where shall we meet with an authentick history of such a people by an impartial well informed writer?

PSALMS.

If the Spirit of God spake by the Psalmist, "and "his words were upon his tongue,"† and if Christ and his apostles may be credited; the Psalms, which some persons venture to call *revengeful*, were prophecies, and denunciations of vengeance on the enemies of the Messiah and his cause. That many of them are predictions, which have been most wonderfully accomplished, no sober man can deny.‡ And whatever ridicule may be employed to degrade the Psalms, they are undoubtedly a collection of the most

---

* Job ix. 9. xxxviii. 31, 32. † 2 Sam. xxiii. 2.
‡ Ps. xxii. lxix. cx.

beautiful odes, and the most exalted strains of heavenly piety, that ever were published to mankind. Those ascribed to David bear *internal* evidence of being genuine; and it is generally understood that a considerable part of the collection was penned by other prophets and inspired persons. The absurd supposition, however, of David being the author of the hundred and thirty seventh Psalm, gives Mr. P. an opportunity of declaiming against the imposition of the Bible, and of diverting his readers with the fancy of 'a man's walking in procession at his own funeral.' But is this the frame of mind, which becomes an enquirer after important truth?

PROVERBS.

Mr. P. allows that there is some wisdom in the Proverbs ascribed to Solomon; though he once decided, (at a time *when he had no Bible*,) that they were inferior to the proverbs of the Spaniards, or the maxims of Dr. Franklin!* But he supposes it to have been the fashion of that day to make *proverbs*, as it is now to make *jest-books*. If this were indeed the case, *that* should have been called the *Age of Reason*, and *this* the *age of levity and folly:* for surely wise proverbs are more reasonable, than profane, filthy, and scurrilous jests, according to the custom of modern times!

Mr. P. expresses great approbation of Agur's prayer, 'as the only sensible, well-conceived, and well-

* P. i. p. 16.

'expressed prayer in the Bible!'* I would therefore heartily recommend it to his constant and fervent use; with an especial attention to the clause, "remove "from me vanity and lies."† If Agur were a gentile, as he supposes, the Jews were not so bigotted, as to reject what they found good even among the heathen: but I imagine Mr. P. knows no more than the rest of us, who Agur and Lemuel were.

He adds, 'The Jews never prayed but when they 'were in trouble; and never for any thing but victory, vengeance, and riches!'—All, who deem prayer their duty and privilege, will be peculiarly earnest in it during special trials, though they never wholly neglect it: and nations engaged in war, if they trust in God and appeal to him, must pray for victory.—Most of the prayers of this kind, recorded in Scripture, were presented by the rulers of Israel, when assaulted by injurious and blasphemous invaders: few prayers for vengeance can be found, which are not evident predictions, or warnings to the enemies of God: and scarcely any for riches, unless exemption from famine, and the blessings of plentiful harvest be so called. Solomon's prayer, for *wisdom*, and not for riches, long life, or the life of his enemies, was not offered in trouble. Mr. P. commends the nineteenth Psalm,‡ yet the latter part of it is a prayer, neither for victory, vengeance, nor riches: and no one, conversant in the Scripture, can be at a loss for instances of a similar kind. He who thus wantonly slanders a whole

---

* P. ii. p. 39. † Prov. xxx. 7—9. ‡ P. ii. p. 28, 29.

nation, is not the most proper person to declaim against the wickedness of priests and prophets.

ECCLESIASTES.*

Mr. P. treats Ecclesiastes, as the reflection of a worn out debauchee, and supposes the exclamation, "All "is vanity," to relate entirely to Solomon's thousand wives and concubines: and he represents him, not as a *penitent* but as *melancholy*. But in fact these wives and concubines are but once hinted at; while the preacher shews in the most convincing and affecting manner, from experience and the nature of things, that magnificence, authority, and sensual indulgence; and even science and wisdom, unless connected with true religion, are *vanity and vexation of spirit:* and he closes with exhorting the reader in the prospect of a future judgment, to "fear God, and keep his com- "mandments; for this is the whole duty of man."

Far be it from me to vindicate Solomon in that conduct, of which he seems to have deeply repented: yet he is represented in Scripture, as drawn aside in his *old age*, and not as *licentious in his youth*. Probably his immense seraglio was principally a foolish affectation of superior magnificence, and a conformity to the eastern customs; while some of his women gained the ascendancy over him, and induced him, towards the decline of life, to commit those crimes, from which he had before been exempt.

---

* P. ii. p. 41, 42.

SOLOMON'S SONG.*

Our author is very merry upon *Solomon's songs*, as he calls this book; and I agree with him, that he wants the tunes, and cannot sing such songs: that is, his heart is not in tune for them.† As this book is not quoted in the New Testament, and as few derive benefit from it till they have learned divine truth from other Scriptures; I shall not enter into any furher argument about it: though I firmly believe it to be a very useful part of God's word.

The sacred writers are not accountable for the order in which the several books are placed in the Old Testament: nor are they arranged in the same manner in the Hebrew Bible, as in our translation. If therefore Solomon's Song has been misplaced; that does not at all disprove the divine inspiration of the holy Scriptures, which is the point I have undertaken to defend.

---

* P. ii. p. 42, 43. † Rev. i. 5. v. 9—14. xiv. 3.

CHAP. IV.

The Prophets.

ISAIAH.

IT is probable, that Mr. P. is the first writer, capable of attracting the public notice, who has deemed the book of Isaiah to be 'bombastical rant, extravagant metaphor, such stuff as a school-boy would have been scarcely excusable for writing!'* I shall however, leave him to settle this point with those able criticks, and admired judges of fine writing, who have decidedly preferred many parts of Isaiah's poetry, for sublimity and beauty, to all other compositions now extant in the world.

Occasional poems and sermons are not always arranged in very regular order: some able authors have published volumes of miscellanies; and we ought not to judge of an eastern writer by *our* rules of method. A *cursory* perusal will not always enable a man to discern the drift and plan of an author, when they may be clearly ascertained upon a more accurate investigation; and sometimes the conclusion of one poem or message, and the beginning of another, escape the notice of a hasty reader: so that there may

---

* P. ii. p. 43.

be much more order and connexion in this book, than Mr. P. supposes. The historical part was evidently added to illustrate the prophecies, and to *prevent*, not *make*, confusion.*

It is very easy to ridicule *the burden of Damascus*, *the burden of Moab*, or *the burden of Babylon;* but not so easy to shew, by what means the writer could foresee, that Babylon, then growing in greatness, and shortly to be the metropolis of the world, would at length be "swept with the besom of destruction," as it actually hath been; so that it is not at present certainly known, where that vast and magnificent city once stood!! This single prophecy amounts to a *demonstration*, that God spake by the prophet Isaiah.

The prediction of Cyrus by name, above an hundred years before his birth, if allowed to have been written by Isaiah, would have subverted our author's whole system. Like an able general, therefore, he forms a stratagem of seizing our artillery, and employing it against us! He confidently *asserts*, (and that passes for *proof* with many readers,) that the whole passage was written an hundred and fifty years after Isaiah's death, in compliment to Cyrus!†

But the connexion of these predictions,‡ with the whole scope of the prophet's address to the people in the name of JEHOVAH, tends to expose the absurdity of this bold assertion. The God of Israel repeatedly appeals to *prophecies already accomplished*, as proofs of his deity in opposition to the claims of idols: he

---

* P. ii. p. 43, 44. † P. ii. p. 44, 45. ‡ Is. xliv. 28. xlv. 1—4.

adds, "New things do I declare, before they come to "pass I tell you of them:" He thus challenges his rivals, the idols of the nations, saying, "Shew the "things that are to come hereafter, that we may "know that ye are gods:"* and after various other predictions, he delivers that in question, with the greatest solemnity, as a proof of his eternal power and Godhead.

Had this prophecy stood *single* in the writings of Isaiah, this pretence might have been rather more plausible: but the whole book is replete with predictions at least equally plain, and verified by the events in the most astonishing manner! So that it might as reasonably be asserted, that the fifty-third chapter was written after the crucifixion of Christ, and the establishment of his religion; or the fourteenth after the entire desolation of Babylon: as that the prediction concerning Cyrus was added after he had conquered the Chaldean monarchy.

The testimony of the Jews, through every age, to this book as genuine, though it contains such numerous prophecies, which were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, sufficiently determines that point with all sober and competent judges; for how could it be possible to persuade a whole nation that they had always been acquainted with the prediction, during the course of an hundred and fifty years, if they had never before heard any thing of it? But infidels seem to *take it for granted*, that if priests be *sufficiently knavish* to attempt

* Is. xli. 23. xliii. 9.

imposition, the people will always be found *sufficiently foolish* to swallow their impostures without examination! whereas much art has ever been found necessary for such attempts; the prophecies of impostors have always been ambiguous; and the miracles to which they pretended, either doubtful in their nature, or wrought only before a few individuals who were friendly to the cause.

It may also be added, that a man must have taken a singular method of complimenting a great prince; who should forge predictions, tending to pour contempt on his religion, and to degrade the gods, to which he was continually sacrificing.

Mr. P. in speaking of our Lord's miraculous conception, as predicted by Isaiah, uses these words, 'This doctrine has stained every spot in Christendom 'with blood, and marked it with desolation.'—Blood enough has, alas! been shed by men called christians; but this doctrine has seldom been so much as the pretence of it. The Athanasians and Arians had too acrimonious contests: but both parties agreed in the miraculous conception, and in this application of Isaiah's prophecy. The papal antichrist has been drunk with the blood of martyrs: but where has the denial of the miraculous conception of Christ been so much as the pretext of these outrages? The Socinians have *only of late* denied the miraculous conception; though many of them, and others likewise, have understood Matthew, as quoting Isaiah by way of accommodation; but they have not in many instances been harassed with bloody desolating persecution. Indeed there would be some difficulty in precisely

pointing out a dozen spots in Christendom, stained with blood, and marked with desolation *on this account.*

Should we grant, that the prophecy had a subordinate reference to events, which took place soon after it was delivered:* it would still be true, that the literal and exact accomplishment can only be found in that great event, to which the evangelist applies it. Some measure of obscurity seems adapted to the nature of prophecy, prior to its fulfilment: and, though the virgin's Son was named JESUS; yet he was EMMANUEL, in his person and character, and has been so called with fervent adoring love and gratitude by tens of thousands in all succeeding generations.

Mr. P. has brought a direct charge of imposition and falsehood against Isaiah, which requires some notice.—The kings of Israel and Syria confederated to invade Judah, to destroy the family of David, and make the son of Tabeal king of Judah: and Isaiah predicted, that this counsel should not stand; that the kingdom of Israel should come to an end in seventy-five years; that the confederate princes should be destroyed; and that the family of David should be preserved till the coming of Emmanuel. At the same time, however, he declared to Ahaz and his princes, that "if they would not believe, they should not be "established."—But we find,† that "the Lord deli-"vered Ahaz into the hand of the king of Syria, and "into the hand of the king of Israel;" and that they

* Is. vii. 14. † 2 Chron. xxviii.

made most dreadful havock of the Jews, and took an immense number of captives:—on this ground, Mr. P. says, 'the two kings *did succeed*, Ahaz was de-'feated and *destroyed*. Thus much for this lying pro-'phet, and his book of falsehoods.'* But we ask, did the two kings succeed *in dethroning Ahaz, destroying the family of David, and advancing the son of Tabeal to the throne?* Ahaz indeed was not established, because he did not believe: he was *defeated*, but he was not *destroyed;* for he survived both the confederate princes many years, and died a natural death. Pekah, king of Israel, *induced by the humane remonstrances of a prophet*, sent back the prisoners, refreshed and clothed from the spoil; and he was slain by Hosea in the fourth year of Ahaz; as Rezin king of Syria was by Tiglath-Pilezer about the same time. Within the prescribed years, the Assyrians finally destroyed the kingdom of Israel, and the family of David was preserved till the birth of Emmanuel. Isaiah's predictions were therefore most circumstantially fulfilled during the course of above seven hundred years: and his accuser was either grossly ignorant of his subject, or very desirous of misleading his readers.

JEREMIAH.†

Jeremiah had prophecied about forty years, when Jerusalem was taken: and, as he had been the faithful friend of his country, and of succeeding princes, for

---

* P. ii. p. 40. † P. ii. p. 47—54.

so long a time; it requires something more than Mr. P.'s assertion to convince an impartial person, that he became a traitor at last; especially as he refused the favours offered him by Nebuchadnezzar, after the city was desolated according to his predictions.

The Lord declares by the prophet, that his promises and threatenings *to nations* contain an implied condition; so that national repentance would avert threatened judgments, and national wickedness forfeit promised mercies.* This Mr. P. calls 'an absurd subterfuge 'of the prophet.' But surely it was a salutary warning and an encouraging instruction, both to Israel and to other nations. *Had the people repented, and yet judgments had come on them; or had they escaped judgments without repentance;* the prophet would have had no subterfuge: and if he had denounced vengeance without any intimation of mercy; the unrelenting spirit of prophets would have furnished a subject for declamation.

The disorder, charged on this book, might arise from the conduct of those, who after Jeremiah's death put his detached messages together, without much regard to the order in which they were delivered. His *predictions* however are generally *dated*, though his *sermons* are not.

Mr. P. accuses Jeremiah of contradicting himself, because two different accounts are given of his imprisonment by Zedekiah: but nothing can be more evident than that he was twice imprisoned; once in the

* Jer. xviii. 7, 8.

house of Jonathan the scribe, whence he was liberated to the court of the prison by Zedekiah; the second time in the dungeon of Malchijah the son of Hammeleck, whence he was freed by Ebed-meleck.*

Mr. P. undertakes to prove, by the example of Jeremiah, that 'a man of God could tell a lie;' and if he had succeeded, it would not much have served his cause, unless he could also have proved that he *vindicated* it: for believers do not consider the sacred writers as *impeccable*, though they wrote under an infallible guidance. His attempt however, is completely unsuccessful. Zedekiah directed the prophet to say to the princes, "I presented my supplication before the "king, that he would not cause me to return to Jo- "nathan's house to die there;" and "he told them ac- "cording to all the words the king commanded."— 'Now' says Mr. P. 'Jeremiah did not *go to Zedeki-* 'ah to make his supplication:' true; neither did he say that he *went for that purpose:* but he adds, 'nei- 'ther did he make it.' Here some will believe Jeremiah, who said "he did make his supplication to the "king:" and some will credit Mr. P. when he says, 'he did not make it.' For my part I believe *the prophet*, considering him as the best informed of the two, and perceiving no reason to suspect his veracity. And even a *man of God* is not bound to tell an impertinent inquirer all he knows.

Mr. P. next accuses Jeremiah of delivering false predictions. The prophet had told Zedekiah, that

---

1 Jer. xxxvii. xxxviii.

" his eyes should behold the eyes of the king of Ba-
" bylon, and that he should speak to him mouth to
" mouth; that he should go to Babylon: that he should
" not die by the sword but in peace, and that they
" should burn odours for him and lament him."*
Mr. P. contrasts this prophecy with the history of the event,† and adds, 'what can we say of these prophets, 'but that they are impostors and liars?'‡ Yet the prediction was fulfilled most exactly; for Zedekiah must have seen the eyes of the king of Babylon, when the latter slew his sons *before his eyes:* he was carried to Babylon where he died, not by the sword, but in peace; and there can be no reasonable doubt, but he received funeral honours from the captive Jews, by the permission of the king of Babylon.

Ezekiel also foretold, that " Zedekiah should not " see Babylon, though he should die there."§ And some years ago I wrote thus, 'Perhaps Zedekiah fan-'cied the two prophets contradicted each other, and 'so disregarded both; but both were exactly accom-'plished, when he was brought to Nebuchadnezzar 'at Riblah, had his eyes put out, and was carried to 'Babylon.'‖ I have since that time entertained some doubts, whether I had not ascribed to Zedekiah a degree of *inattention*, beyond all probability. Mr. P. however, has actually far exceeded it.

He next asserts, that 'Jeremiah joined himself to 'Nebuchadnezzar, and went about prophesying for

---

* Jer. xxxiv. † Jer. lii. 10, 11. ‡ P. ii. p. 53.
§ Ezek. xii. 13. ‖ Family Bible.

'him among the Egyptians.' This representation of Jeremiah's conduct contradicts in express terms the only narrative we have of those events. He refused the friendly offer of Nebuzaraddan; and with a patriotism which would have been admired in any man, except a prophet or a priest, he chose to cast his lot among the remnant of his distressed countrymen. He did all in his power to prevent their migration into Egypt, and was at length carried along with them by force. There indeed he prophesied against the Egyptians and other nations, and especially *against the Babylonians*, without the least advantage or attention from Nebuchadnezzar: and these prophecies, with their *remote* but exact accomplishment, will stand to the end of time as demonstrations that Jeremiah spake by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Mr. P. represents the prophets as party men in politicks, and he produces as an instance the prophet from Judah, who went to Jeroboam.* No doubt he took part with the worshippers of JEHOVAH against the devotees of the golden calves: but the old prophet at Bethel does not seem to have *sided* with Jeroboam, though he had not courage to protest against his idolatry. His assertion that the prophet of Judah was 'found dead by the contrivance of the prophet of Is-'rael, who no doubt called him a lying prophet,' is absurd in the extreme, and directly contradicts the whole narrative.

Mr. P. next attacks Elisha as a *Judahmite* prophet,

---

* 1 Kings xiii.

though he spent his life in Israel, and never at all prophesied in Judah!—Joram the son of Ahab was a very wicked man and a most incorrigible idolater: Jehoshaphat, though faulty in forming connexions with him and his family, was a most pious and equitable prince. When therefore these two kings, with the king of Edom, applied to Elisha in extreme distress,* he shewed respect to Jehoshaphat, but would shew none to Joram. In any other man Mr. P. would have admired the noble spirit evinced by this conduct: but in this case he calls it 'the venom and vulgarity of a 'party-prophet!'.

The prophet, probably finding himself discomposed by recollecting the idolatries and persecutions of Ahab's family, called for a *minstrel*, that his serenity might be restored, and his mind prepared for the prophetick impulse. Mr. P. strangely mistakes the *minstrel*, or player on an instrument, for the instrument itself: and adds, 'Elisha said, (singing most pro-'bably to the tune he was playing) Thus saith the 'Lord, make the valley full of ditches—without either '*farce* or *fiddle*, the way to get water was to dig for 'it.'—Does this jumble of mistake and raillery require any answer? Neither the kings nor their officers expected to find water by digging there, and how came Elisha by his superior discernment? The Moabites deceived by this singular appearance of the water, rushed upon their destruction; which would not have been the case, had water been generally ob-

* 2 Kings iii.

served in that place. Whole armies have been known to perish, for want of water, in those very deserts; and it is indeed self-evident, that this army was preserved, and rendered victorious, either by the sagacity of the prophet, or by the word which the Lord spake by him: yet he must be branded as *venomous* and *virulent*, for protesting against Joram's c es, in far milder language, than Mr. P. or his friends have used against the kings of France or England!

The conduct of Elisha, in cursing the children in the name of the Lord, has been objected to by more candid and serious men than Mr. P. and therefore requires some consideration. These children, or *young persons*, *immediately after Elijah's translation*, reproached Elisha with his baldness, and bade him *go up*, or *ascend;* as if they had said, 'a good riddance 'of all prophets.'* They had been evidently taught by their idolatrous parents to revile the prophets of JEHOVAH; their enmity was become desperate: and if true religion be important, it was proper to apply some effectual remedy to the inveterate evil. If the prophet had cursed them *in his own spirit*, would JEHOVAH have concurred in his malignity? Were the she-bears at his command? Would any consequences have followed? Had the prophet slain the children himself, or employed any of his party in putting them to death, *there would have been some pretence for* these bitter accusations: but as the case stands, the justice of God is directly arraigned; for he was the *only agent* in the

* 2 Kings ii. 23.

business.—If the children had died of a fever, the affair would not have been noticed: yet the solemnity of the sentence and execution, while it was no severer punishment to them, was far more calculated to make an useful impression on their survivors.

EZEKIEL AND DANIEL.*

Mr. P. is of opinion that the books of Ezekiel and Daniel are *genuine*. This concession may perhaps surprise such persons, as are not aware of the fecundity of his genius; especially as Daniel's prophecies have received so circumstantial an accomplishment, that an ancient opposer of christianity had no way of escaping conviction, but by asserting, contrary to all proof, that they were written after the events predicted in them! But Mr. P. perhaps afraid lest his reader's attention should flag, has prepared a new fund of amusement, by *imagining* these books to contain a *political cypher* or *secret alphabet*, under the pretence of dreams and visions, and that they relate to plans about recovering Jerusalem. Hence he infers, that we 'have nothing to do with them:' and provided that be the inference, numbers will excuse the want of proof and probability.

It is, however, very wonderful, that these *political devices* should contain such animated exhortations and fervent prayers; and above all so many prophecies, that have been ever since fulfilling! Egypt is become

---

* P. ii. p. 57—60.

a *base* kingdom, and has been subject to a foreign yoke almost from the time when the prophet wrote.* Tyre, that prosperous commercial city, is now a place for fishermen to dry their nets.† And the four great monarchies, Alexander's conquests, and the affairs of his successors; the cutting off of the Messiah, and the desolation of Jerusalem after seventy weeks, have exactly accomplished Daniel's predictions. Surely then Mr. P. had a mind to make trial of the credulity of mankind, in this whimsical absurdity!

Ezekiel is supposed to have been carried captive eleven years before the desolations of Jerusalem, and Daniel about eighteen;‡ and not 'both together, nine 'years before,' as Mr. P. erroneously states it. Daniel was employed at court, and Ezekiel lived at a distance, and we do not read of any intercourse between them. The first six chapters of Daniel are *historical*, and relate to miraculous interpositions of God in behalf of his people; and not the most remote intimation of a project for recovering Jerusalem is found in the whole book. Many of Ezekiel's visions, and all Daniel's, are dated after the desolation of Jerusalem; when the poor dispersed captives could have no hope of recovering or rebuilding that city by any stratagem: nay, some of Daniel's visions are dated after the return of the Jews from Babylon, by the decree of Cyrus.

Mr. P. has no right to find fault with romantick interpretations of Scripture; after having given the most

---

* Ezek. xxix. 14, 15. † Ezek. xxvi. 14. ‡ Ezek. i. 2. Dan. i.

ridiculous exposition of Ezekiel's vision, that the world has yet seen! His own words may justly be retorted on him. 'Such applications of Scripture shew the 'fraud or extreme folly, to which the credulity of mo-'dern infidelity can go!'

Mr. P. asserts that Ezekiel's prediction concerning the forty years desolation of Egypt never came to pass: but it requires a complete knowledge of all that happened in those ages to prove this.—It is certain that Nebuchadnezzar conquered Egypt, and carried multitudes of its inhabitants captives: forty years from that time brings us to the reign of Cyrus; when it is probable that the Egyptians, as well as the Jews, were allowed to return home, and inhabit their wasted country.* And is it not more rational to elucidate the obscurity of history by this prophecy; than to make the obscurity of history an argument against a prophecy, of which every other part, as contained in four chapters, has most certainly been accomplished? Especially *when* the next verse is fulfilling at this present day: "Egypt shall be the basest of the kingdoms, neither "shall it exalt itself any more among the nations."

JONAH.†

Mr. P. having greatly diverted himself and his readers, with the story of *Jonah and his whale; seriously* undertakes to prove, that the whole book was a gentile fable, *intended* to ridicule and satirize the Jews and their prophets!‡

---

* Ezek. xxix. 11—14. † P. i. p. 59. ‡ P. ii. p. 60—63.

Jonah's conduct, in various particulars, admits of no excuse: yet it is much easier to condemn him, than it would have been to have acted properly in his circumstances. The mariners deserve commendation for their desire to preserve his life: but his narrative, and his manner of speaking concerning the Lord, must have impressed them with awe, lest they should provoke the God of Israel, by putting his servant to death.

The mariners at first "called every man *upon his* "*god;*" but after they had heard the words of Jonah, they "feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sa- "crifice to JEHOVAH, and made vows." They had been idolaters; but probably were converted to the true religion by what they saw and heard on this occasion.

The Almighty God was certainly able to prepare a great fish to swallow Jonah, and could preserve him alive to the third day in its belly; however profane scoffers may ridicule the narrative. The fables of Hercules swallowed by a sea-monster, and ship-wrecked Amphion carried to shore by a dolphin, seem to have been derived from the vague report of this transaction.

Jonah's conduct and disposition at Nineveh too much 'resembled that malevolent spirit, that black- 'ness of character, which men ascribe—to the devil;' that is, depraved nature too much shewed itself. Yet he should not be blamed for delivering his message faithfully. His conduct is unparalleled in Scripture; no one there mentioned with approbation, shewed so proud, angry, impatient, self-seeking, and presumptuous a disposition, as he did.—Jeremiah appealed to the Lord, "that he had not desired the woeful day,"

which he predicted: he declared, that if the people "would not hear, he would weep in secret places for "their pride;" and his lamentations evince his sincerity. Moses preferred death to the destruction of his ungrateful countrymen, even with the greatest advantage to himself and family.—"Rivers of waters ran "down David's eyes, because men kept not God's "law:" and Paul had continual heaviness and sorrow of heart on account of his unbelieving countrymen. So that *prophesying evil* does not incline men *to wish for it:* because all do not prefer their own credit to the glory of God and the happiness of multitudes, as Jonah did most wickedly on one occasion.

The Creator's *partiality*, if Mr. P. will use that word, appears as much in other histories as in that of the Bible. The Lord does certainly afford advantages to some nations and individuals, which he withholds from others: but the Scripture never represents him, as conniving at the sins of his favoured nation, or punishing the guiltless because they did not belong to it. On the contrary, he says, "You only have I known "of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish "you for all your iniquities."*

Learned men agree that *three days, and three nights*, in the Hebrew idiom, denote any portion of time ending on the third day: and if neither ancient nor modern Jews object *on this ground*, to the application of the history of Jonah to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; it does not seem very candid in others

* Amos iii. 2.

to attempt it. Our Lord's express testimony confirms the whole account, so that it stands on all the evidence of the New Testament: and the history is replete with most important instruction.

As to the other *minor prophets*, Mr. P. leaves them 'to sleep undisturbed in the laps of their nurses the 'priests;' content with having ridiculed *the idea of the greater and lesser prophets*,* which common sense explains to mean no more, than that the books of the latter are much shorter than those of the former.

'I have now,' says this confident writer, 'gone 'through the Bible, as a man would go through a 'wood, with an axe on his shoulder, and fell trees;'† a man *going through a wood with an axe on his shoulder* differs widely from *cutting down the whole wood*:‡ and Mr. P.'s cavils, against the several books in the Bible, differ as widely from subverting their authority by unanswerable arguments. If he supposes that he hath done his work; "It is as when an hungry man "dreameth that he eateth; but he awaketh and his soul "is empty."

For I appeal to every impartial man, who will bestow pains fairly to investigate the subject, whether Mr. P. has substantiated a single charge against the writers of the Old Testament; except as its contents do not accord to men's common opinions; its arrangement is not formed on modern notions of method; and some trivial alterations have taken place in the text.

Convinced of Mr. P.'s talents and determined resolution in his undertakings, and conscious, that a joy-

---

* P. i. p. 18. † P. ii. p. 64. ‡ P. i. p. 18.

less life and hopeless death must be the consequence, if the only source of my confidence and consolation could be torn from me; I opened these books with a sort of trepidation. But I must declare, that I never felt a firmer assurance that the Bible is the word of God, than I do at this moment; having found, that misapprehension, misrepresentation, wit, declamation, and invective, are the sum total, which the keenest capacity and most virulent enmity can produce against it.

CHAP. V.

The New Testament.

THE GOSPELS.

MR. P. opens his attack on this part of Scripture by saying, 'The New Testament, they tell us, is found-'ed on the prophecies of the old; if so, it must follow 'the fate of its foundation.'*—Injudicious concessions have often been made by the friends of truth: and this seems to be one. The prophecies of the Old Testament prepared the way for the coming of Christ; and, as accomplished in him, they constitute an unanswerable proof that christianity is a divine revelation: and the testimony of our Lord and his apostles so confirm the divine inspiration of the Old Testament, that if strict *demonstration* could be brought against it, believers would be reduced to great difficulty; but that is impossible.—In other respects the New Testament stands on its own basis: internal and external evidence confirm most fully it's divine original; and this *alone* might be sufficient to support the authority of the Old Testament also, if we had not other proof in abun-

* P. ii. p. 64.

dance. But indeed the two parts of Scripture give stability and symmetry to each other. The Old Testament led to an expectation of the New, as its completion; the New Testament presupposes the truth of the history, and the divine authority of the laws, ordinances, and instructions, of the Old.

Mr. P. admits in an hesitating manner that such a person as Christ might exist: adding, that 'there is no 'ground either to believe or disbelieve!'* Indeed!—Why, was the existence of any one man since the creation so undeniably proved? It would be comparatively a moderate degree of scepticism, to doubt the existence of Alexander, Julius Cæsar, or Mahomet; for the effect of their existence, on the state of mankind in all succeeding ages, is very small, compared with that produced by christianity: and how could that religion have existed, if Christ had not existed?

It is now generally allowed, that Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph in the line of Solomon, and Luke that of Mary in the line of Nathan, sons of David. The method in use among the Jews, in keeping their registers, required the name of Joseph to be inserted, instead of Mary his wife, as constituting a link in the chain or pedigree: and it was proper that both genealogies should be given. This solution of the difficulty is so obvious and satisfactory, that it is wonderful any difference in sentiment should have prevailed among learned men on the subject. The writers of

* P. ii. p. 65.

the New Testament would not have had common sense, if they had inserted manifest contradictions in their narratives: and forgery could have no occasion for them, as it would have been very easy for one of them to copy from the others. Indeed lists of names are strange things to forge! Though I firmly believe that the evangelists wrote by the superintending inspiration of the Holy Spirit; I suppose they copied such matters from the publick registers: and as none of the ancient enemies of christianity attempted to disprove these genealogies, while the original registers existed; it will be wonderful, if *proof* should now be given that they were falsified.

The genealogy of Matthew, from David to Christ, contains no more than twenty-seven generations, and Mr. P. asserts on this account that 'it is not so much 'as a reasonable lie:' for he computes that, upon an average, every one in this succession lived to the age of forty, before his *eldest son* was born. He should have said, his *eldest surviving son*, yet that would have been but little to the purpose. For Solomon was not David's eldest son; Abijah was not Rehoboam's:* and after the captivity, the line might be continued in the younger male branches. We know also from the history, that the three immediate successors of Jehoram, son of Jehosaphat, are omitted in the genealogy, it is uncertain on what account; as is likewise Jehoiakim the father of Jeconiah. There were therefore nineteen generations from David to the captivity: and

* 2 Chron. xi. 18—21.

similar omissions might occur in the subsequent part of the genealogy.

Mr. P. to strengthen this argument asserts, that 'Solomon had his house full of wives and mistresses 'at the age of one and twenty.' But where did he learn this? Solomon had one wife when his father died, and soon after he married Pharaoh's daughter. He might have many other wives and concubines at the same time for any thing we know; but the Scripture no where mentions them.

Mr. P.'s language concerning the miraculous conception of Christ, is such a mixture of misrepresentation, absurdity, indecency, and blasphemous impiety, as perhaps never was equalled! It deserves and requires no answer: and it is too vile even to bear being further exposed to just contempt and abhorrence!

The Holy Ghost has hitherto been supposed to be, either *a divine person, according to the doctrine of the Trinity;* or *a created spirit of supra-angelick dignity;* or *a peculiar mode of divine operation:* but who ever thought of understanding that expression to mean *a ghost*, or *departed spirit*, according to the vulgar acceptation of the word?—The language of Scripture teaches us nothing more, than that the divine power of the Holy Spirit *miraculously* produced the human nature of Christ in the womb of the virgin; and that he was thus *truly man*, though conceived and born without the defilement, which is communicated to all the natural descendants of fallen Adam.

Had Mary's testimony to the appearance of the angel, and the miracle of her pregnancy, been *single and unsupported*, it would not have been entitled to credit:

but connected with the preceding prophecies, the testimony of Zacharias and Elizabeth, and the well-known circumstances attending the birth of John Baptist, and confirmed by all the subsequent events, it becomes credible in the highest degree: for every proof of christianity authenticates it.

Mr. P. touches but slightly on the *disagreement* of the evangelists, in their histories of the events that occurred from the birth to the death of Christ: but it is an old objection which must not pass unnoticed. Had the four evangelists recorded precisely the same miracles, discourses, and events, with the same circumstances; the charge of forgery would have been more plausible. If four authors should give us as many histories of certain interesting transactions in China or Japan, not writing by concert, each would record such facts as had more immediately fallen under his observation, with such circumstances as most engaged his attention; and each would follow his own peculiar plan. When these histories were published, events would be found recorded in one, which were not mentioned in the other, with *apparent* incongruities which a little attention might reconcile; and the order of the narrative would not be exactly the same in them all. And on this ground a man might stand forth, and affirm that they were impostures and contradictory legends.—Now suppose four other men to give each an account of some transactions in a remote part of the world; and no difference at all to be found in their books, but that of style and manner; and another person should on this ground exclaim, 'These men have combined to deceive us:

'had not this been the case, there must have been some 'variations in their narrative:' we might leave it to any man of candour to determine which of these objections would be most reasonable.

Industry, ingenuity, and malice have, for ages, been employed, in endeavouring to prove the evangelists inconsistent with each other: but not a single *contradiction* has hitherto been proved upon them. Their circumstantial variations, in relating the same event, only evince that they did not copy from one another. They recorded those facts, which most impressed their own minds as important: they wrote in succession, and did not think the preceding historians needed any vouchers: and it suited their design, to omit many things for the sake of brevity, and that they might relate others of equal moment.—But one thing is fact. These four men, of whom such contemptuous things are spoken, have done, without appearing to have intended it, what was never performed by any authors before or since. They have drawn a perfect human character, without a single flaw! They have given the history of one, whose spirit, words, and actions, were in every particular exactly what they ought to have been! who always did the very thing which was proper, and in the best manner imaginable! who never once deviated from the most consummate wisdom, purity, benevolence, compassion, meekness, humility, fortitude, patience, piety, zeal, and every other excellency! and who in no instance let one virtue or holy disposition entrench on another; but exercised them all in entire harmony and exact proportion! The more the histories of the evangelists are

examined, the clearer will this appear: and the more evidently will it be perceived, that they all coincide in the view which they give of their Lord's character. This subject challenges investigation, and sets infidelity at defiance! Either these four men exceeded in genius and capacity all the writers that ever lived; or they wrote under the special guidance of divine inspiration: for without labour or affectation they have effected, what hath baffled all others, who have set themselves purposely to accomplish it.

Indeed that man seems to have a peculiarly vitiated taste in *composition*, who does not admire the simplicity connected with sublimity, with which the evangelists record the miracles of Christ. I should think that even infidels of genius must be struck with the *manner*, in which such astonishing events are related.

The story of Herod's slaying the children *rests* on Matthew's testimony, and on the proofs of *his divine inspiration:* it accords perfectly to the character of that bloody tyrant! and it was not necessary that the succeeding evangelists should repeat it. John Baptist was born at Hebron, at a considerable distance from *the coasts of Bethlehem;* so that Mr. P.'s attempt to prove, from his preservation, that the story belies itself, is ridiculous in the extreme.

Had the evangelists expressly undertaken to give an exact copy of the inscription over the cross of Christ; nothing could have been more easy: but they perfectly agree as to the import of it, which is quite sufficient.

Mr. P. asserts, that 'Peter was the only one of the 'men called apostles, who appears to have been near

'the spot at the crucifixion.' Yet John tells us, that he witnessed the whole scene, and received the orders of his dying Lord concerning his mother. 'We may 'infer from these circumstances, trivial as they are,' that this author knows very little about the subject on which he writes; and numerous other instances might be adduced, if it were worth while.

Peter denied his Lord with cursing and swearing; that is, he disclaimed all acquaintance with him: but he did not deny him to be the Messiah, the Son of the living God. How great soever his crime was; his ingenuous confession of it, and his subsequent labours and sufferings in the cause of Christ, sufficiently entitle him to credit, in his testimony both to the crucifixion and resurrection: but his testimony is a very small part of the evidence on which our faith is surely founded.

Different methods have been taken to reconcile the sixth hour, mentioned by John, with the accounts of the time of our Lord's crucifixion, as stated by the other evangelists: but if it be allowed a trivial error in some transcriber, which might easily take place in a *numeral letter;* what doubt can that excite in a serious mind as to the authenticity of a narrative, attested in all its leading parts, by four distinct historians? Impostors would have avoided such observable inaccuracies.*

Matthew is generally allowed to have written before the other evangelists: had they not therefore credited his account of the miracles attending Christ's

* P. ii. p. 71.

death; they would have contradicted it: for the circumstances which he related were of so extraordinary and publick a nature, that they could not have escaped detection, if they had been false.*

It would have degraded the sacred history, to have noticed such subjects, as Mr. P. proposes in his questions, concerning the saints that arose, and came out of the graves after Christ's resurrection. Our Lord's reply to the frivolous objection of the Sadducees may suffice to answer them all. "Ye do err, not knowing "the Scriptures, nor the power of God." We may indeed add, that there is no reasonable doubt, but these risen saints accompanied their ascending Lord, to grace his triumphs, as the first-fruits of his resurrection. Mr. P. says, 'Had it been Moses and Aaron, 'and Joshua and Samuel, and David,' (supposing them to have appeared to the people,) 'not an uncon-'verted Jew had remained in all Jerusalem.' It might be asked, how the Jews could have *known* these risen saints to have been Moses and Aaron, &c. except by their own testimony, or by immediate revelation? But waving this: the reader has his option, whether he will credit this assertion of Mr. P. or the words of Christ, "If they believe not Moses and the prophets; neither "would they be persuaded though one rose from the "dead."

Matthew alone relates the account of the Roman soldiers who guarded the sepulchre: but does this prove, 'that according to the other evangelists *there* '*were none?*' Will not common sense determine, that

* P. ii. p. 72.

their silence allows the truth of *his* narrative? By publishing his gospel, and relating the base conduct of the priests and rulers, Matthew had openly challenged them to disprove it if they could: but this they never attempted; and surely they would not have silently endured so disgraceful an imputation, if they had not had substantial reasons for their conduct.

The absurdity of the story, which the rulers put into the mouth of the soldiers, is sufficiently evident: but if men act absurdly, historians are not to blame for recording their actions. The evangelist appealed to the whole nation, that the story was notorious; that it had been propagated immediately after the body of Christ was missing; and that it had continued current till the time when he published his narrative. It is most evident that some of the soldiers had affirmed, they were paid for circulating it: none of them were called to account, that we know of, for this or any other part of their conduct: and no man stepped forth, to say, that such a story had not been propagated, or was not current; that the priests had not bribed the soldiers to spread it; or that they could give a more satisfactory account of the manner in which the body of Jesus had been removed. How could men have been persuaded that such a report had long been current, if they had never before heard of it? or that it was still current, if every body knew it was not so? Or how could an anonymous writer, or rather one who assumed another man's name, have thus appealed to facts, as well known when his work was published, and for some time before; if such facts had been mere forgeries?—Mr. P. indeed argues from the expression, "until this

" day," that Matthew did not write the gospel, and that it was manufactured long afterwards. But *seven* or *eight* years would suffice in this case, and warrant a man to use such words. We have abundant proof of the antiquity and genuineness of Matthew's gospel. But could it be shewn to have been published long afterwards, it would still further establish the fact in question: for an appeal to contemporaries some ages after, that the report concerning the soldiers was commonly circulated till *that day* must be an additional evidence of its truth.

The circumstances of our Lord's resurrection, as recorded by the four evangelists, have been long known to involve some difficulty, and to have the appearance of inconsistency: insomuch, that Celsus, in the *second century*, brings this as an objection to the christian religion. But Mr. P. by confounding things evidently distinct, and using various methods of embarrassing the subject, has given the whole an air of self-contradiction, very suited to impose on the incautious reader: and, as this subject is more likely to embarrass even *a serious enquirer*, than any other in 'The Age of Reason,' I shall endeavour to give a compendious statement of the narrative, as it may be collected by carefully comparing the four evangelists.

Mary Magdalene, the other Mary or Mary the mother of James and Joses, Salome, and Joanna, are the women named in the history: but Luke, having mentioned all the others, except Salome, says, " there were " other women with them." This company, on the evening of our Lord's crucifixion, concerted the plan,

and bought the spices, for the anointing of his body: and then retiring, probably to separate lodgings, they "rested the sabbath-day, according to the command-"ment." But early on the morning after, they proceeded according to appointment, to *meet at the sepulchre;* for there is no mention of their *previous meeting* at any other place; and thus they reached that spot at different times. Mary Magdalene seems to have set out with the other Mary and Salome, from one place; Joanna, and the other women with her, from another. But Mary Magdalene, being peculiarly fervent in spirit, appears to have out-gone her companions, and to have arrived first at the sepulchre, *while it was yet dark*, or *day break;** and seeing the stone removed, she ran back to inform Peter. In the mean while the other Mary and Salome reached the sepulchre; and finding it open, they went in and saw the angel, or angels. Matthew and Mark mention only one angel, because only one spake to the women: but they do not say there was no more than one. Thus Matthew mentions two demoniacks, where Mark and Luke speak of but one; doubtless because that one was most remarkable, both before and after his dispossession. Though possibly Luke spake of Joanna, and her company.—While these women returned into the city, Peter and John seem to have passed them by another road: and coming to the sepulchre they saw no angels.† But Mary Magdalene, who had followed them, and staid at the sepulchre when they returned, saw two angels, and afterwards Christ himself; who di-

* John xx. 1, 2. † John xx. 3—18.

rectly after appeared to the other Mary and Salome, as they returned to the city.* In the mean time Joanna and her company arrived at the sepulchre *bearing the spices*: for though the other women are said to have *bought the spices;* yet it is probable that Joanna, and those accompanying her, carried them to the place. When therefore they first entered the sepulchre, they only observed that the body was gone: but afterwards two angels appeared and accosted them.† Then they returned into the city in haste, and meeting with the apostles, before the other women had seen them, they informed them of what they had observed; upon which Peter went again to the sepulchre. About this time the two disciples set out for Emmaus, having heard only the report of these women; and neither that of Mary Magdalene, nor that of the other Mary and Salome.‡ These at length arriving, informed the apostles that they had seen Jesus himself: and soon after on the same day he appeared to Peter also.

There are other ways of reconciling the *apparent* disagreement between the evangelists, in respect of this transaction: yet none can certainly say, that things occurred exactly in this or the other manner. It suffices to shew, that things *might* thus happen, and that the evangelists do not contradict each other. Had the apostles been examined in open court, to prove what Mr. P. calls an *alibi*, I am persuaded the explanations which they could have given of the general narrative, would have removed all appearance of inconsistency,

---

* Matt. xxviii. 9—11. † Luke xxiv. 1—9.
‡ Luke xxiv. 12—34.

as this arises entirely from the brevity, with which they touched upon the leading circumstances. It may, however, be observed, that the primitive enemies of christianity were as implacable at least as any are at present; that they were engaged by interest and reputaion, as well as inclination, to prove the apostles false witnesses; that they desired exceedingly to put them to death; and that they certainly possessed more advantages for detecting the imposture, if there had been any, than a modern unbeliever can pretend to after seventeen hundred years: yet they never attempted to disprove the testimony of the apostles respecting the resurrection, or to shew that they contradicted each other.

The variations, in the narratives of the evangelists, are in fact no more than what arose from the occasion. Four men, relating the outlines of such an event, with great conciseness as circumstances impressed their minds, without trying to coincide in their several accounts, will always seem to disagree to the superficial observer. Such abstracts must appear in some measure abstruse to strangers, and especially in future ages: but if fuller investigation remove the difficulties, they rather confirm than invalidate the leading facts which they concur to establish. Let any man consult Rapin, Hume, Burnet, and Macauley, upon some parts of the English history which they have all written: and he will find, even where prejudices have not misled them, that circumstantial variations are discoverable, which require pains to reconcile, and *to form into one consistent narrative, without omiting the most minute particular.*

We do not pretend, that the inspired historians were changed into elegant and methodical writers; but that they were preserved from error, misrepresentation, or material omission. Should their narratives, therefore, not stand the ordeal of criticism, as to the arrangement and manner of composition, it would not at all affect the argument.

Some detached remarks must be added on Mr. P.'s misrepresentations of the subject. The different accounts given by the evangelists, of the *time* when the women arrived at the sepulchre, may be reconciled by considering that they did not all come together. In general none reached the spot before *day-break*, none after *sun-rise;* and minute exactness, in such things, is not at all requisite to historical truth.

Matthew alone mentions the angel's rolling away the stone, but all the other evangelists say it was *rolled away:* so that in fact they confirm his testimony. Matthew says the angel sat *on the stone:* Mr. P. says, that, 'according to the others, *there was no angel* '*sitting on it.*'* According to Matthew, the angel *sat on the stone*, when he appeared to the *keepers* or Roman soldiers; "and for fear of him they became as "dead men!" But they had so far recovered themselves, as to flee from the place, before any of the women arrived: and the angel or angels then appeared, *not on the stone*, *but in the sepulchre.* As no intimation is given, that any of the women saw the soldiers, on their arrival at the sepulchre; it is almost certain that they had previously left the place. Matthew in-

* P. ii. p. 74, 75.

deed seems to state the *report made by some of them to the chief priests*, as subsequent to the women's departure from the sepulchre: but the whole time required for all these transactions would be very short: and probably the soldiers retired in confusion to their quarters, and did not at first resume their confidence, or come to any determination what to do; till after a while, some of them went to inform the chief priests, and others dispersed rumours among their acquaintance concerning what had happened.—There is not, however, the least ground for Mr. P.'s confident assertion, that they were present, during 'the *conver-* 'sation of the women with the angel.'

'Thomas,—as they say, would not believe, with- 'out having ocular and manual demonstration; *so nei-* 'ther will I: and the reason is as good for me, and 'for every person as for Thomas!'* Most certainly, because it was good for nothing in Thomas; but he was guilty of a most absurd incredulity. He that will not believe the combined testimony of several unexceptionable witnesses, is an obstinate unreasonable sceptick: and, if he carry his principles into temporal concerns, he must cease from business, food, and medicine, and die like a wrong-headed fanatick; because he cannot have ocular or manual demonstration, that he shall not be cheated in all his concerns, or poisoned by his cook or apothecary. In respect of another world, and its infinite concerns, the required proof cannot be had, till it be for ever too late.

---

* P. i. p. 9.

Mr. P. introduces the angel as saying of Christ, according to Matthew's account, *behold he is gone into Galilee;* instead of *behold he goeth,* or *is going:* though the same evangelist just after mentions his meeting the women! Matthew indeed says, "Then "the eleven disciples went into Galilee:" but he does not say that they *went on the day when Christ arose;* how then does he contradict the account of John?

It appears from John, that the apostles staid at least eight days at Jerusalem, after our Lord's resurrection: for it was so long before Thomas was convinced, and owned Christ as his Lord and his God; and this does not at all disagree with Matthew's compendious narrative. But Mr. P. boldly says,* 'It appears *from the* 'evangelists, that the whole space of time, from the 'crucifixion to what is called the ascension, is but a '*few days*, apparently not more *than three or four;* 'and all the circumstances are reported to have hap-'pened nearly about the *same spot.*' Either Mr. P. is more ignorant of the writings which he would expose, than any other author ever was of his subject, or else he wilfully asserts what he knows to be false. No man, who reads the evangelists, can help seeing, that much longer time, *than three or four days*, was taken up in these transactions, and that some of them occurred *at the sea of Tiberias in Galilee*, at least sixty or seventy miles distant from Jerusalem. The writer of the Acts of the Apostles says expressly that our Lord continued forty days on earth, previously to his ascension; and

* P. ii. p. 8.

that the apostles began to preach on the feast of Pentecost, that is fifty days after Christ's resurrection.

Mr. P. intimates, that our Lord appointed the meeting in Galilee on the very evening of his resurrection; and he says, that 'Luke tells a story (concerning the disciples at Emmaus) 'which totally invalidates 'the account of his going to the mountain in Galilee.' But does not every attentive and candid man perceive, that the apostles might stay a week or ten days at Jerusalem, where Christ might repeatedly meet them in a private room: that then they might journey into Galilee, and meet him with numbers of those who had formerly known him: and that afterwards, returning to Jerusalem, they might witness his ascension?

He next objects to the '*skulking* privacy of our 'Lord's appearance, in the *recess* of a mountain, or 'in a *shut up house* in Jerusalem.'* The preposition, however, which the evangelist uses, in respect of the mountain in Galilee, is exactly the same with which he introduces the sermon on the mount. "He went "up *into a mountain.*"—A situation similar to that, from which he addressed an immense multitude, could not be a *skulking privacy*, or the *recess* of a mountain.

The Galileans, among whom our Lord had principally lived, were the most proper witnesses of his resurrection: and it cannot reasonably be questioned, but that on this occasion he was seen of five hundred brethren at once; when, probably by reason of the dis-

* P. ii. p. 79.

tance, some *still doubted*, till further evidence convinced them. The inhabitants of Jerusalem were less capable of recognizing his person: yet they saw what may be considered as equivalent, in the descent of the Holy Ghost on the apostles, and the subsequent effects.

Important reasons may be assigned, why a competent number of witnesses should be selected to testify our Lord's resurrection, while God himself confirmed their testimony by miracles; rather than that he should shew himself to the rulers and people of the Jews. Had he done this, and had the scribes, elders, and priests, persisted in rejecting him; the testimony of the apostles would have laboured under many additional disadvantages, among other nations, and with future ages. Had they unanimously embraced the gospel, the whole would have the appearance of a scheme for aggrandizing the nation. In either case the evidence to us could not have been at all augmented: for we should have had only the testimony of the individuals who recorded those events; and these would at least have been as liable to objections and cavils as they now are.

Mr. P. remarks, 'that Paul *only* says five hundred 'saw Christ at once, and that the five hundred do not 'say it for themselves.'* Was it then to be expected that these five hundred persons should write as many books, to declare they saw the risen Saviour? If they had, we should have been five hundred times as much

* P. ii. p. 78.

perplexed, as we now are, in order to determine whether they were *genuine* or not! But Paul, by appealing to about three hundred living witnesses at once, put it into the power of his enemies to disprove his confident assertion, had it not been true: and as it has never been contradicted, it is equivalent to the testimony of multitudes. Mr. P. however, aware that Paul's testimony is very important, endeavours to set him aside: for he says, 'his evidence is like that of a 'man, who comes into a court of justice to swear, 'that what he hath sworn before is false. A man may 'often see reason, and he has always too a right, of 'changing his opinion; but this liberty does not ex-'tend to matters of fact.' A man, it is true, has no *power to change matters of fact;* but surely he has *liberty to change his opinion concerning them!*

Paul, by crediting the gospel, which he once hated, *altered his opinion concerning matters of fact:* and when he attested what he had before denied; he only declared himself convinced, that Jesus was risen, and that christianity was true.

Should Mr. P. thus change his opinion concerning the gospel, and publickly avow his conviction of its truth; men of sober mind would think him an unexceptionable witness in the cause: especially, if he fully laid before the world, those arguments by which he had been convinced of his mistake, and unreservedly took shame to himself for his former groundless and violent enmity to the cause of God.

Mr. P. says, 'the story of Jesus Christ appearing 'after he was dead, is the story of an apparition.' If by a *miraculous* power he entered the room, not with-

out *opening the door, but without its being opened for him;* and if he *disappeared* or ceased to be seen by the disciples, though on other occasions they saw and handled that very body which had been crucified, and those hands and feet, and that side, which had been pierced: what proof do these circumstances afford that it was an *apparition?* Must a risen body be subject exactly to the same things, as our dying bodies are? May not God exert his power as he sees good? The risen Saviour ate and drank to prove that he was truly a living man: but this does not prove that he needed meat and drink.—The reality of the apostles' mission, did not at all rest on the Jews seeing Christ ascend; but on the miracles, which they were enabled to work before the people, after the descent of the Holy Ghost: yet the consistent united testimony of eleven unexceptionable witnesses, to words *spoken in a celler*, or actions done *upon a mountain*, is evidence *in publick*, sufficient to prove any thing which is not impossible; but if a man will not believe, till there be no *possibility of denial or dispute*, the light of eternity alone can convince him. There is proof enough of our Lord's ascension, to satisfy reason, to satisfy reasonable men: and the only wise God did not ask counsel either of ancient or modern sadducees, what kind and degree of evidence it was proper for him to afford.

Mr. P. alludes on this occasion to the ascent of a balloon.* Now I would ask any reasonable man, whether he doubts the fact of men having ascended

---

* P. ii. p. 8.

into the air by means of a balloon, because he never saw it? The evidence given, that it hath been done, satisfies my mind as completely, as if I had witnessed the scene: and I am as sure of it, as to all practical purposes.

I agree with Mr. P. that it is impossible to *unite inspiration and contradiction.* But I affirm, with a confidence equal to *his*, that he has not proved, and that he cannot prove, a single contradiction upon the evangelists.

It is observable, that Mr. P. cannot find any avowed *opposer* of christianity, previous to A. D. 400, who denied the gospels to be *authentick* histories. The fact is, that Celsus in the second century, Porphyry in the third, and Julian in the fourth, admitted it, and argued against the christians on other principles. Mr. P. is therefore welcome to Faustus as a coadjutor in this undertaking: for he came too late to disprove by mere assertion what both friends and enemies had agreed in for nearly four hundred years.* Faustus was a Manichean; he contended that Matthew did not write the gospel which bears his name, because he is always *mentioned in the third person;* and he has been generally treated as a very ignorant, or a very dishonest, man for this attempt. Mr. P. is also welcome to all the help that forged gospels can give him: for *forgery always implies the existence of the thing counterfeited, and commonly its excellency likewise.* And the hereticks who *at the commencement of christianity, rejected as false all the New Testament*, at least testified that the book *then* existed,

* P. ii. p. 84, 85.

and was generally deemed authentick and divine, though they refused to submit to it's authority. The inducements indeed to forgery, in the primitive times, were poverty, stripes, contempt, imprisonment, and martyrdom!—Mr. P.'s sneers at *possessions* may excite the laughter of some readers, but do not at all disprove the facts authenticated by the evangelists. And if the type and the anti-type, the prophecy and its fulfilment actually coincide; as the key and lock exactly fit together, notwithstanding the greatest intricacy of wards: the word *picklock* will never convince a rational man, that they were not intended for each other.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

Mr. P. has scarcely said any thing about this book, except that it is *anonymous* and *anecdotal*.* But it is in fact an *avowed* appendix to St. Luke's Gospel, and inscribed to the same person. And it is of far more consequence in the argument, than this slight notice seems to intimate: for it certainly gives us a most distinct and probable account of an undeniable fact, which it is impossible by any other means to account for, namely, *the success of christianity, after the crucifixion of its Founder, in opposition to all the authority, learning, and religion of the world, by the labours of a few poor fishermen, and others of equally obscure rank in the community.* Admit this narrative to be true; and the resurrection of Christ, with the divine authority of the Scriptures, is established beyond dispute: deny it; and besides the difficulty of disproving

* P. ii. p. 23.

so long received an history, it becomes necessary to give some other probable account of the *early* prevalence of the gospel, which is rendered indisputable by the testimony even of pagan writers.

The conversion of St. Paul likewise is recorded in this book; which Mr. P. indeed denies to have been miraculous. Does he then mean that the light above the brightness of the sun, the articulate voice calling to Saul by name and discoursing with him, and the other circumstances of the apostle's narrative, may all be ascribed to a flash of lightning?—The extraordinary change in the conduct and principles of Paul were notorious to all the world: and his own history of the manner in which it took place must be deemed authentick, till it be proved either *false* or *impossible*. He gave sufficient proof, that he did not attempt to impose on others: and the facts which he relates were of such a nature as to exclude the possibility of his being himself deceived: while his subsequent blindness for three days, and the silence of his companions, who would have contradicted his account had it been false, combine to establish it.

Mr. P. objects to Paul's testimony to christianity, because he was a *zealot;* or in other words because he spake and acted as a man in earnest: as if no man were an unexceptionable witness, who thoroughly believes his own testimony, and is ready to lay down his life in confirmation of it!—The difference between a *fact* and a *doctrine in* this case is not to the purpose: for admit the *facts*, by which the apostle was convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah; and the *doctrine* which he preached must be owned to be divine.

That Paul had been *extremely* prejudiced and violent against christianity must be allowed; and this rendered his conversion the more wonderful: but he ran into no extremes, in his zeal for the gospel: at least his vehement zeal was gentle, loving, patient and prudent, and he seemed disposed to treat no one with severity except himself.

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL.

Mr. P. seems to have very little examined this part of Scripture! for he scarcely notices any particular in it, except the apostle's discourse concerning the resurrection, which he strangely mistakes, or misrepresents.

'If,' says he, 'I have already died in this body, 'and am raised again in the same body, it is presump-'tive evidence I shall die again.' This objection entirely coincides with the cavil of the ancient Sadducees, and is answered by our Lord himself. Certainly this view of a resurrection is gloomy enough: but the apostle's doctrine of "this mortal putting on immor-"tality, and this corruptible putting on incorruption," has a very different aspect.—Mr. P. says he should prefer a 'better body, with a more convenient form;' and he thinks that every animal has in many respects the advantage of us. I apprehend some deists may so far reverence the Creator, as to deem Mr. P.'s language on this subject reprehensible, and savouring of ingratitude: nay, perhaps they may be disposed to maintain, that the erect structure of the human body best suits the rational nature; and that the astonishing ad-

vantages, which our *hands* afford us, give us a decided pre-eminence over all other creatures here below. We have however such bodies as it hath pleased God, and we must exist in another world according to his good pleasure, whatever we may *choose* or hope.

Mr. P. next retorts the apostle's words upon him, and repeatedly calls him *a fool!* But had he duly considered the nature of *death*, which is not *absolutely ceasing to exist*, but *ceasing to exist in the former manner;* he would, as a naturalist, have seen, that except *seeds die*, they are not quickened. "Unless they *die* they abide alone," as our Lord also says; who is thus involved with the apostle in our author's peremptory charge. The seed, before it grows, ceases as much to be a grain of corn, as a man at death ceases to be a living man; and is as absolutely irrecoverable to its former mode of existence by any human power: yet it springs up into a new life, incomprehensibly, by the power of God, as men will rise at the last day. So that the illustration is sufficiently just and clear; even though *ingenuity* could find out some shades of difference, with which men in general are wholly unacquainted.

The rest of the epistolary writings are passed over by our author, with the same kind of neglect as he shewed to the minor prophets; except that he insinuates they were *forged*, and pretends that they are of no consequence in the argument; which will be considered in another place.

I suppose, his wit, in saying, 'the whore of Baby-'lon has been the common whore of all the priests; 'and each has accused the other of keeping the

'strumpet,' is intended as his confutation of the Apocalypse; for, this sally and an assertion; 'that it is a 'book of riddles, which requires a revelation to ex-'plain it,' is all that he advances concerning this part of Scripture. Yet the numerous predictions it contains, and the undeniable accomplishment which many of them have already received, amounts to a complete moral demonstration that it is the word of God.

Having gone through Mr. P.'s objections to the New Testament; I must declare my complete assurance, that, after all his most confident declamations about contradictions, lies, and impostures, he has not substantiated one single charge. And it would be easy to retort upon him: for the instances of disingenuity, misrepresentation, wilful calumny, or astonishing ignorance of the subject, which might be produced, were that necessary, are exceedingly numerous. And thus I leave the matter to the judgment of the candid and impartial reader.

I shall now proceed, in a second Part, to call the reader's attention to several important subjects, which are not peculiar to any part of Scripture, but relate in some measure to the whole of the sacred oracles. In doing this, I mean both to exhibit the great outlines of that positive proof, on which I believe the divine inspiration of the Scriptures; and the real nature and tendency of the religion contained in them.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

REVELATION.

'REVELATION, when applied to religion, means 'something communicated *immediately* from God to 'man.'* By this definition Mr. P. begs the question: for if revelation means an *immediate* communication from God to man; then indeed nothing communicated from God to us, by the intervention of other men, whether speaking or writing, can be properly so called. The definition may, however, be admitted, in respect of the *original source* whence all revelation is derived: but if it pleased God, *immediately* to communicate to one man, what he meant him to declare to others in his name, and to *authenticate by proper credentials;* the real, or generally received, sense of the word *revelation* will be preserved, though it be communicated from one man to another, over the whole earth, and to the latest ages. The doctrine or precept came originally from God, by *immediate* communication, and was no human discovery or imposition.

* P. i. p. 5, 6.

Mr. P. allows that God has the power to make such a communication, if he pleases; but thinks it improbable he ever should:* and he is confident that God *cannot* enable the man, who first receives this communication, to authenticate it to any other person, so as to render belief of it a duty! This is a very extraordinary assertion! I am able to send a message or a letter by a servant, or in some other way; and to give *full assurance* to a person at a distance, that it comes from me. I can make my will, and so attest it, that, after my death, all parties concerned shall be entirely satisfied it was *my* act and deed: and yet the omipotent and eternal God *cannot* send a message or make known his will, by the intervention of any servant or messenger! Is this *reason*, or absurd and daring *presumption?* To support such a system, it was necessary to *assert* that miracles are impossible, and prophecies impostures and lies; and then to affirm, that we can have no proof but *heresay* of any supposed revelation! On this ground Mr. P. may stand; provided he can *demonstrate* his principles: but if they be merely *assumed* and *false*, it must sink under him. For if a man comes with the rod of Moses in his hand, as well as with "Thus saith the LORD" in his mouth; the miracles which he performs are the seal of his mission, and his testimony can no longer be called *heresay and assertion.*

Mr. P. ventures on another definition of *revelation;* and says, 'It is communication of something which

---

* P. ii. p. 95, 96.

the person did not know before.'* If so, then every accession to our knowledge, however obtained, might be called a revelation: which surely will not help us to affix right ideas to words. From this vague proposition our author infers, that all the historical and *anecdotal* part of the Bible is not within the compass of 'the word *revelation*, and therefore is not the word of God.' But surely God may reveal past events, of which no other information could be obtained. "By "faith," and consequently by revelation, "we understand that the worlds were framed by the word "of God."† Whatever traditionary information Moses might receive, concerning the creation, the fall, the deluge, and other events preceding his own time; he might be immediately instructed, and guided by an *infallible superintending inspiration*, in recording them. This was needful to enable him entirely to distinguish between truth and error in tradition; to know such things as had not been retained in the memory of mankind; and to form a history fully adequate to the ends proposed. In like manner, a similar superintending influence would be requisite, to preserve the sacred historians from falling into error or misrepresentations, through forgetfulness or prejudice, even in respect of those facts of which they had personal knowledge: and it would be still more necessary, when their information was received from others, either by word or writing. So that the idea of *revelation*, in its more general meaning, does not suppose the writer to be wholly ignorant of his subject, or to make no use of

* P. i. p. 14. † Heb. xi. 3.

his knowledge and opportunities: but merely, that the infallible superintending inspiration of the Holy Spirit preserved him from errors and prejudices, and all other causes of misapprehension or falsehood; and immediately communicated such things, as he would otherwise have omitted, through ignorance or forgetfulness.

I am induced to stand this ground, in respect of *the divine inspiration of every part of the scriptures:* because the sacred writers, for themselves and for each other, expressly and constantly claim it; so that their writings are together called *the oracles of God.* It is evident, that the Jewish Scriptures, in the days of Christ and his apostles, were nearly if not entirely the same as the Old Testament is at present: yet they are continually quoted in the New Testament, in a peculiar manner, as divine inspiration. And if we allow this to the historical part of the Old Testament; we can hardly deny it to the writings of the apostles and evangelists, which contain the only account extant in the world of the origin and success of christianity. The apostle Peter ranks the epistles of Paul among the *other Scriptures;** the sacred writers always speak with authority, as in the name of the Lord; and it will appear that their books have been regarded as the word of God, even from the primitive times. There seems no alternative, between admitting their claim to *inspiration* in the fullest sense, and utterly denying it. If some parts of the Scriptures

---

* 2 Peter iii. 16.

are inspired, but others not: we want either *another revelation* to enable us to distinguish between the word of God, and the word of man intermixed with it; or else an infallible authority on earth, to which we may appeal: and so we must either have recourse to the Pope, who has the title by prescription; or to those learned men, that give up the inspiration of some parts of Scripture in defending that of the rest, and who ought to oblige us by exactly distinguishing between them.

If the whole Scripture be inspired, sober criticism may generally discover the interpolations and variations, which have occurred in a lapse of ages; and thus distinguish the word of God from human additions: and if a few passages still remain doubtful, the cause of truth will not be affected. But if the line be not exactly drawn between the infallible word of God, and human opinions or dubious passages; every one who is put to difficulty in maintaining his sentiments, by the authority of Scripture, will evade the argument, by contending that the text in question is not inspired: thus the standard of truth and duty will be rendered entirely vague and uncertain: and it will not be much worth while to contend for the *authenticity* or *genuineness* of these ancient records, if we give up their divine authority, as the infallible rule of our faith and practice.

Mr. P. says, that 'Revelation could not make fic-'tions true.' It might, however, preserve men from writing fictions, and lead them to record all needful truth: and few have occasion to be told, how partial

d delusive most histories are, through the passions and misapprehensions of historians.

He observes in another place,* that 'not only *un-* '*changeableness*, but even the *impossibility of a change* 'taking place, by any means or accident whatever, is 'an idea that must be affixed to what we call the word 'of God.' Now what is this but asserting without the least proof, that God cannot give a revelation of himself to his creatures? Notwithstanding the imperfections of language, the want of an universal language, the errors of translators, copyists, and printers, &c.; authors make a tolerable shift to communicate their sentiments to mankind, (some of them even to remote ages and nations,) with little hazard of material mistakes: and cannot the almighty and only wise God do the same?

Though Mr. P. asserts, that translations of revelation can in no degree be depended on; and thence argues against the Bible:† yet he thinks translations may very well answer the purpose, in respect of natural knowledge, which is *his revelation*. 'There is now 'nothing new to be learned from the dead languages: 'all the useful books are translated, and the time ex- 'pended in teaching and learning them is wasted.'‡ but translations may not always be exact, and the knowledge of the original languages is very useful: yet good versions will suffice to afford the unlearned reader a competent knowledge of all that is essential in any book; learned men will give warning to their neigh-

---

* P. i. p. 19. † P. i. p. 26. ‡ P. i. p. 37.

bours, if a palpably false translation be palmed upon them, of any work which interests mankind in general; and even the dissentions among christians in this land evince the fairness of our translation of the Scriptures; for all parties commonly refer to it. In like manner, the contests between christians and Jews, and the controversies carried on with real or supposed hereticks, warrant our confidence that these contending parties so watched over one another, as to prevent all material alterations in those books, to which they agreed in making their appeal.

If any christians reject *reason* in receiving revelation, they act as absurdly, as if a man should put out his eyes, that he may simply avail himself of the light of the sun; instead of putting out his candle as of no further use. *Reason* should be employed in weighing the evidences, and understanding the meaning, of *revelation:* and *faith* itself, in the common affairs of life, constitutes one important exercise of our rational faculties, by which we derive *information from testimony*, in a variety of cases, with which we could not otherwise be sufficiently acquainted for practical purposes. As far indeed as this exercise of our understanding relates to *the testimony of God in scripture*, it is so connected with the state of the will and affections, and produces such effects upon our whole conduct: that we, as fallen creatures, are morally incapable of it, without the influences of divine grace; and our vain fallible *reasonings*, with the conclusions deduced from them, must not be put in competition with the unerring decision of the word of God: nevertheless divine faith is in all respects most reasonable, and one of the highest uses of our rational powers.

Mr. P. seems to consider *false revelations*, as a proof that there is no *true revelation:** but do forged bank-bills prove that no genuine bank-bills exist? Nay, does not common sense deduce the opposite inference? Indeed false revelations could never have obtained credit; if men had not generally deemed a revelation possible, desirable, and even probable. We should then carefully distinguish between the precious and the vile; and not reject all together.

Revelation may be considered as *immediate* to the person who receives it from the Lord; and *mediate*, to all that receive it from him to whom it was first communicated. It relates to doctrines, precepts, or facts; and to things past; and present, (in time though invisible to us;) and future, as the day of Judgment and an eternal world. A communication from God of things wholly unknown before, and undiscoverable by other means, is an *entirely new revelation:* but immediate information concerning things in some measure known before, or discoverable in other ways, is a *partial revelation*. When new truths were revealed, new ordinances instituted, and material changes in religion introduced; unequivocal miracles were necessary to authenticate them, and to seal the prophet's mission and prove his authority. But where the messenger, though immediately inspired, was only employed to enforce those truths and precepts which had before been divinely attested, miracles were not absolutely necessary; (though they might be very useful in exciting the attention of the people;) for the appeal might

* P. i. p. 41.

be made to a preceding authenticated revelation. No *apparent* miracles can prove the truth of any doctrine, which contradicts the essential principles of a former authenticated revelation: such as JEHOVAH being the one living and true God, the heinousness of idolatry, &c.: but the excellent nature and tendency of a doctrine may be a corroborating evidence of its divine original. These thoughts, however, make way for another subject, which requires a particular consideration.

CHAPTER II.

MIRACLES.

MR. P. endeavours to confound *miracles* with *monsters, absurdities, impossibilities*, or natural uncommon events. 'No one thing,' says he, 'is a greater mira-'cle than another; an elephant not a greater miracle 'than a mite, a mountain than an atom!' But whoever conceived *any of these creatures* to be *miracles?**—The ascension of a balloon, electricity, magnetism, and the recovery of a drowned person, are said 'to have every thing in them which constitutes 'the idea of a miracle.' Whereas nothing answers the proper idea of a miracle, which well informed persons can account for on natural principles; though it may answer the purpose of impostors in deceiving mankind. Will any man affirm that the miracles, said to have been wrought when Moses waved his rod, can be thus accounted for? What *natural* efficacy could fill Egypt with frogs, flies, lice, or locusts, exactly at the time when it was foretold they would come? or turn the waters into blood? or cause thick darkness for three days in the whole land, while Goshen enjoyed the light? or destroy in one night all the first-born

* P. i. p. 56, 57.

of man and beast? or divide the sea, for the deliverance of Israel and the destruction of Pharaoh? Could an artful man impose on the senses of two whole nations, in such matters, as a juggler can deceive a few people in a room? By what natural powers, which philosophy may explain, could Christ give immediate sight to a man born blind, cure inveterate paralyticks in a moment, and give *calmness* and rationality to distracted persons, and soundness to withered limbs? How could he restore full health at once to such as languished in fevers, or call the dead out of their graves? Could multitudes be persuaded that they saw these effects, when they saw them not? Could not the rulers, who crucified Jesus, have disproved his pretensions to miracles, if he had not wrought them? Would they and their posterity to this day have imputed them to magick, or similar causes, if they could have denied them? Did not these miracles challenge investigation from the best informed and most inimical persons? Were not time, place, and circumstances particularly mentioned; and the appeal thus made to vast multitudes? What have magnetism, electricity, balloons, or magical deceptions, in common with such miracles? In some cases the *suspended* principle of life may be restored by proper means; yet such humane efforts often prove unsuccessful: but when did Christ or his apostles fail of accomplishing their purpose? If among ten thousand supposed to be dead, one should be merely in the state of a strangled man; who could certainly know that one from all the rest, as carried forth to be buried, or as laid in the grave? And should any person now go forth, in the presence of as-

sembled multitudes, and say "Young man arise," "Lazarus come forth;" would not his pretensions be soon exposed?

'The lameness of the doctrine, which needs a mi-'racle to prove it,'* means its contrariety to our false notions and corrupt affections; and it implies, that we should not have discovered it without revelation. The argument therefore stands thus: 'Every doctrine is '*lame*, that we cannot know without revelation, or are 'not disposed to receive: so that revelation is needless 'and useless: miracles are only needful to support re-'velation; therefore all miracles are imposture; and 'cannot authenticate revelation:' And thus our reasoner completely argues in a circle!

Miracles confirming important truth and giving authority to divine injunctions, answer far other purposes, than 'to make people stare and wonder.' They do not stand on the testimony of a *single* reporter, as if *Mr. P. should tell us he wrought a miracle in his study;* but on the testimony of hundreds and thousands of witnesses.—Who would have believed Lunardi, if he had told us, that he had ascended into the air in the deserts of Arabia; when no such event had ever *here* been witnessed? But as he ascended before ten thousand spectators, what reasonable man can doubt it? Or who in future ages will dispute the veracity of the authors who record it? The dilemma is therefore, not, whether it be more 'probable that nature should 'go out of her course, or *a man tell a lie:*' but whether it be more probable, that God, for wise reasons,

* P. i. p. 58.

should suspend or alter the course of nature, on some important occasions; or that ten thousands of witnesses should be deceived in the most evident facts, or combine together to deceive the world. And would not any one be ridiculed, who should gravely say, 'It is 'more probable that a man should lie, than that people 'should mount into the air?' This I think is a fair statement of the evidence concerning balloons.

'It would have approached nearer to the idea of a 'miracle, if Jonah had swallowed the whale: this may 'serve for all cases of miracles.'* This may indeed serve for a specimen of Mr. P.'s logick and candour. If a miracle be 'an *impossibility attested by a single* '*witness*,' his arguing against all miracles is conclusive. Indeed he speaks of miracles as things *naturally incredible:*† and in several places seems disposed to retail Mr. Hume's famous sophism, that 'miracles are 'contrary to universal experience;' which means neither more nor less than *the experience of all who never saw them!* The African prince, who called the Europeans liars, when they told him they had seen rivers and seas congealed by frost as hard as a stone, was of the same *reasonable* disposition! This was contrary to the universal experience of all those who inhabited the torrid zone; and it was more probable men should lie, than that things naturally incredible should be true!—But in fact, miracles must be extraordinary events, to answer the end proposed by them: and if they became so common, that every body had seen or observed them; we should be ready to think them the

* P. i. p. 59. † P. ii. p. 4.

effect of some unknown natural causes, instead of a divine interposition.

Mr. P. says, 'the most extraordinary of all the 'things called miracles, is that of the devil flying away 'with Jesus Christ.'* The New Testament relates no transaction of this nature: we are there only told, that "the devil took Jesus to the holy city," "and to "the mountain:" and that "he brought him to Jeru- "salem;" which does not imply, that he was carried through the air, or went without his own free consent, or that it was properly speaking miraculous. So that in this, as in other instances, Mr. P.'s profane ridicule falls on his own absurd interpretation of Scripture.

Revelation has been shewn to be *possible;* and it will hereafter be proved *needful.* The God of goodness and mercy purposes, as we suppose, to make known to mankind his perfections, truth, and will; and to shew them, in what manner he is pleased to be approached and worshipped. He therefore communicates these things to an individual, and orders him to inform others concerning them. But the prophet may on such an occasion say, 'How shall it be known that 'the Lord hath sent me? The things to be declared 'are contrary to men's notions and practices; the world 'is full of impositions; how shall I be distinguished 'from a deceiver?' Now does it not occur to every reasonable man, that miracles, which could endure the strictest examination, wrought in the presence of multitudes, and frequently repeated or varied, would dis-

* P. i. p. 59.

tinguish the true prophet from all pretenders to inspiration, who either wrought no miracles, or such only as were ambiguous and shrunk from investigation? If it be not unsuitable to God to give a revelation to his creatures; it cannot be either improper or impossible for him to affix such a seal to the instructions of his messengers as can neither be denied nor counterfeited, without exposing to shame the man who attempts it. To raise the dead is as easy to omnipotence, as to preserve the living; to restore the withered arm, as to wither the healthy one; and to cure instantaneously the paralytick after thirty eight years, as to send a stroke of the palsy. The glory of God and the benefit of mankind are the ends proposed; the means are obvious. All things may be alike *wonderful* to us; but all are not alike *miracles:* for miracles are effects produced, beyond the powers of man, and contrary to the ordinary course of nature: and when well authenticated, they are equally credible with other events; provided it appear also, that some important end was intended, and some great effects were produced by them. In this view, how different do the miracles of Scripture appear, from the *insulated*, *ambiguous*, *uncertain*, and *useless* miracles, pretended to have been wrought by Vespasian, or in favour of Alexander's army! Though Mr. P. says these are quite as well authenticated as the Bible-miracles!*

If the miracles ascribed to Moses, or to Jesus Christ and his apostles, were actually performed; it must be allowed, that they were the work of omnipotence, and

---

* P. ii. p. 5.

can no otherwise be accounted for. It would also have been impossible to have forged such stories of publick miracles, so circumstantially related, and to have given them currency among contemporaries. Whole nations, especially of enemies, cannot thus be deprived of their senses, or inhibited the use of them. It would have been equally impossible to have persuaded the next generation, that their fathers had told them of these wonders from their infancy, and that they had seen and heard them; if they had never been told such stories by their fathers. And at what time could the belief have been received either by Jews or christians, that these *miracles had always been credited among them*, had there been no truth in them? The attempt to convince whole nations, or large bodies of people, that from time immemorial such things had been generally known and assuredly believed; and that they had observed certain festivals and institutions in commemoration of them, and were subject to laws and ordinances given at the same time; if the whole had been a forgery, must have been deemed an insult on the common sense of mankind.

The fables, which have obtained credit in different nations, had always some foundation in truth, however distorted. They never specify the *precise time, place, and manner*, in which things happened: and they do not appeal to numerous living witnesses, and challenge investigation. The poets of Greece and Rome did not pretend, that they were eye-witnesses of the stories, with which they embellished their works. Homer and Hesiod vamped up fabulous traditions current among the Greeks: but they did not

declare, that the whole nation, yea, and rival nations also, saw those things; and that they wrote their account *at the time* and *upon the spot*. This could never have obtained credit, even in those days.—But can any man conceive that it would now be possible to invent a history of the remote times of this nation; and to persuade mankind, that it had always been as commonly known among us, as the books of Moses are among the Jews, or the New Testament among christians? And would it not be equally impossible to introduce such an history with *this kind of appeal*, at any future time, had it never before been published?

In order to illustrate the subject, let us consider the single miracle of our Lord's resurrection.—His ignominious death and subsequent glory are evidently predicted in the Old Testament; and his enemies knew, that he had foretold his own resurrection on the third day, and took their measures accordingly. On the third day the body was gone, and they could give no rational account of its removal. Twelve men, of good character and sober understanding, such as any court of justice would allow to be unexceptionable witnesses, constantly affirmed that they saw Jesus after his resurrection, and examined his hands, feet, and side; that they had long known him, and were sure it was he; that they had repeated opportunities of conversing with him, and renewed assurances that they beheld the identical body again alive, which had been nailed to the cross; and at length that they saw him ascend towards heaven. In this testimony they persisted till death, without one of them deviating from it. In support of their testimony, they renounced

every interest, and faced all kinds of dangers and sufferings imaginable; till most of them sealed it with their blood. In all other respects they were most virtuous and holy characters: and their doctrine is so strict, that according to it a forgery of this kind, however well intended, will, unless repented of, ensure a man's eternal damnation. A great number of other witnesses confirmed their testimony; and the silence of their enemies, whose credit, authority, and even safety, were deeply concerned, tends to establish it. In authentick history we are told, that they wrought divers miracles, and communicated similar powers to others, in support of their evidence; and that thus God himself attested it. In the epistles written by them to the churches, they speak of these miraculous powers, as things well known, without fear of being disproved. Their success, in opposition to all the power, learning, genius, and religion in the world, merely by preaching a crucified and risen Saviour, confirms these claims and the event they testified: and the existence and effects of christianity for nearly eighteen hundred years, combine with all the foregoing proofs, to authenticate the miracle of Christ's resurrection.

If that event had not actually taken place, how could such multitudes, prejudiced in various ways against the gospel, have been induced to embrace it? How came they, who continued enemies, to submit silently to the charge of having murdered the Prince of life? Or how was christianity established in the world? No fact was ever so fully confirmed as this, by multiplied and varied testimony; and by permanent, extensive, and most important consequences.

Even the Jews have not denied the miracles of Christ and his apostles, however perplexed to account for them: yet each miracle was equal at least to an unexceptionable witness of the resurrection, and consequently to the truth of christianity. This may also answer Mr. P.'s objection to the testimony of the Jews. I suppose no man ever thought of bringing them forward as *direct voluntary* witnesses to the truth of the gospel: but they indisputably confirm the antiquity of the Old Testament, and the reverence with which it hath been regarded by their nation for at least five hundred years before Christ; they establish all the facts that relate to him, except his resurrection; and their present condition, fulfils the predictions both of the Old and New Testament. But to say, that the Jews are the best evidence '*concerning* '*the truth of the gospel;*'* is to affirm in other words, that none but enemies should be admitted as witnesses; and that when any of them are convinced and become christians, their testimony is thenceforth inadmissable.

---

* P. i. p. 9.

CHAPTER III.

PROPHECY.

MR. P. would persuade us that prophets were merely *poets*, or *musicians*, who made no pretensions to inspiration or prediction; and that christian theologists have advanced them to their present rank!* This he endeavours to prove, by observing that there 'is not 'a word in the Bible which signifies a *poet*.' Certainly there is in the New Testament;† but if there were not, what would this be to the purpose? There is no word in the Bible for a metaphysician; *ergo* a prophet signifies a metaphysician!—But he says that the prophets wrote in verse! This they did frequently: yet they sometimes wrote in prose.—Occasionally they played also on musical instruments. What then? Did none except prophets write poetry, and use music and psalmody? Did they all do these things? The New Testament prophets are not recorded to have used either musick or poetry. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are expressly and repeatedly called *prophets;*‡ though Mr. P. denies it: and says, 'it does not appear that they could either sing, play

---

* P. i. p. 17—19. 60, 61. P. ii. p. 54, 55. † Acts xvii. 28.
‡ Gen. xx. 7. Ps. cv. 9—15.

musick, or make poety.' But whatever were the original idea of a *prophet* or *prophesying*, who but Mr. P. would have confidently asserted the meaning at present annexed to those words to be a *modern* invention? What! did not the ancient Jews expect a Messiah according to the prophets?—Yet he allows that 'the 'profession of a SEER: the art of seeing, a visionary 'insight into things concealed, became incorporated 'into the word prophet, at the time when Saul banished the wizards!'* Who can help noting with admiration this writer's consistency!

The words *poet* and *prophet* are in pagan writers in some respects synonymous: because the pagans ascribed poetick raptures to inspiration. Thus the poet was exalted into a prophet, not the prophet degraded into a versifier and musician: And I am confident the sober student of the Bible will find very few passages, in which the idea of a divine impulse, in one way or other, is not evidently connected with the words *prophet* or *prophesying;* except where false prophets are evidently intended.

The moral character of the *man* was not *essential* to the prophetical office. Balaam was a vile wretch; yet his predictions have been wonderfully accomplished: and many such prophets will be detected at the day of judgment. The *evil spirit* from God did not come on Saul, *when he joined the prophets;* but "the Spirit "of God came upon him and he prophesied."† But when the spirit of the Lord departed from him, an evil

* P. ii. p. 55. † 1 Sam. x. 6—12. xix. 20—24.

spirit from the Lord troubled him:* and then indeed he acted *very ill;* for perhaps mimicking the agitations of the prophets when under divine impulses, he was instigated by Satan to attempt the murder of David.

A *prophet*, in Scripture, does not always denote one that predicts future events: but it means in most places a man supernaturally instructed or directed by the Lord; except when false prophets, the counterfeits of the true, are spoken of. The argument concerning predictions does not however depend on the meaning of a word: it must be decided by facts. Did not the ancient prophets foretel a variety of circumstances concerning the promised Messiah, which were exactly fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth? Did they not mark out the line whence he would spring, the place of his birth, the miracles which he would perform, the usage which he would experience, the sufferings which he would endure, his conduct under them, with that of the Jews and soldiers; his death, burial, and resurrection, and the subsequent prevalence of his cause? If this be undeniable; how absurd is it to pretend, that moderns have falsely dignified Jewish poets and musicians with the title of prophets!

Were not the predictions of the Old Testament exactly descriptive of the events, which have since taken place, respecting Egypt, Tyre, Nineveh, Babylon, Jerusalem, and the Jewish nation? Does not the New Testament contain predictions of "Jerusalem trodden "under foot of the Gentiles;" "the Jews scattered "through all nations;" and the superstitions, idolatries,

* 1 Sam. xvi. 14, 15. xviii. 10.

usurpations, and persecutions of that church, which hath forbidden to marry, and commanded to abstain from meat, hath enjoined the worship of angels, and been drunken with the blood of christians? Were these predictions unmeaning words, or random conjectures? —Even the Romans, from a slight acquaintance with the Jewish Scriptures, had concluded that some wonderful person was about to arise in the world, when Christ was born, as Virgil's eclogue called *Pollio*, and the famed sybilline books undeniably prove.

'Nothing seems more suited to convince a *sensible* '*but hesitating enquirer* concerning the truth of reve-'lation, than a careful comparison of' the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy 'with the actual history of 'the Jewish nation to the present day. This appears 'capable of effecting every thing that any external evi-'dence imaginable can effect: and the demonstration 'thence deduced, which may be continually re-exa-'mined, at leisure and with deliberation, seems more 'convincing than any miracles, which are *transient* '*acts*, and can only be reviewed in the testimony by 'which they are authenticated.'*

I have not entered particularly on the subject of *types;* because I would not rest the argument of the divine inspiration of Scripture on that ground, but on things more obvious: otherwise, to a considerate mind a very wonderful confirmation of the truth may be derived from them, as well as an illustration of it.—But I would here further observe, that there is not a single instance throughout the Scripture, in which any inti-

* Family Bible.

mation is given, that "it repented the LORD," when a *remote prophecy* was spoken of, for this expression always relates to threatening messages, when averted by reformation, or in answer to the prayers of the prophet. So that 'the Bible makes no fool' of any man; but tells him plainly what to expect in all possible cases.

If revelation were impossible, or could not be communicated; prophecy would indeed be *useless*. But if it ever pleased God to reveal himself to mankind: as miracles were more suited to impress that generation to whom the prophets were sent; so predictions, evidently accomplishing from age to age, while new predictions were still given, must be the most conclusive proof to remote generations. And did the limits of this work admit of it, the predictions, interwoven with all the separate divisions of the Scripture, might be shewn to demonstrate them severally, as well as collectively, to be the word of God. But I shall only add, that, if Mr. P. and his disciples desire to know further the use of prophecy, let this answer suffice: it enables us to shew, that the scoffs and reproaches of infidels were predicted by the sacred writers: that the very abuses of christianity, which they deem unanswerable objections to its divine original, are in every instance a fulfilment of the Scriptures; "thus it was written, and thus it must be:" and that in this respect prophecy enables us to cut off Goliath's head with his own sword.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE VOTED FOR.

MR. P. says, ' *They* decided by vote, which of the ' books—should be the word of God, and which ' should not.' ' Those books which had the majority ' of votes, were voted to be the word of God. Had ' they voted otherwise, all the people, since calling ' themselves christians, had believed otherwise.' ' Who ' the people were that did all this, we know nothing ' of: they called themselves—the church: and this is ' all we know of the matter.'* But surely a man ought to know much more of the *time*, *place*, and *manner*, in which such an important transaction occurred, than this *ambiguous* statement contains, before he is authorized to infer any thing from it! And *some proof* is requisite to convince thinking men, that all christians have hitherto in every succeeding age taken their faith upon trust, according to this representation. Pious persons indeed have, *privately* and *collectively*, bestowed great pains, during a succession of ages, to distinguish such books, as have internal and external evidence of authenticity and divine inspiration, from

* P. i. p. 13.

impostures and writings of doubtful authority: and, before our time, this matter had been so thoroughly investigated, that the most competent judges deem it not dangerous to coincide in opinion with those that have gone before them; though not without enquiry, and some trivial difference of sentiment. The Old Testament evidently stood, a considerable time before Christ, nearly as we now have it. The Greek, Syriack, and Samaritan versions prove this. Our Lord and his disciples quoted the books now received, and the writers of the New Testament generally use the Septuagint. It is commonly believed, on the authority of ancient Jewish writers, that Ezra, a learned scribe in the law, with some very able associates, bestowed much labour in distinguishing the authentick books of Scripture from such as were spurious, and thus formed the canon of the Old Testament. And the more the subject is examined, the greater satisfaction will every candid person feel, in acquiescing in their determination. For all the books we now have harmonize with each other, and with the New Testament, in the grand outlines of religion, and indeed even in more minute particulars when well understood: but the apocryphal books often advance anti-scriptural doctrines, and relate most frivolous and romantick adventures. Every thing in the received Scriptures coincides, in respect of dates, customs, the manners of the times, and historical transactions, with the most authentick records of antiquity: but anachronism, confusion, and inconsistency abound in the Apocrypha.

The canon of the New Testament fluctuated for a long time: but the diversity of opinion related only to a few books; and full *discussion* and *investigation*, not *mere vote*, at length determined the christians to receive them as they now stand; while others were rejected as spurious for *the most substantial reasons*. This surely proves, that great caution was used to prevent all imposition. No reasonable man can doubt, but the christians, who lived in the primitive times, had many advantages in determining this point; and their opinion is therefore entitled to great deference: but learned men are capable of reviewing the subject, and judging of the grounds on which they decided.

It is *certainly known*, that the greatest part of the books now constituting the New Testament were quoted by the most ancient christian writers; and in a manner which shews they derived their instructions from them, and appealed to them as *of divine authority*, and thus to be distinguished from all other books which had been published among them. A vast proportion of the New Testament might be recovered from writers, who lived within the two first centuries. They formed catalogues of the books, and wrote comments on them. Both the orthodox and the hereticks made their appeal to them. Lectures on several parts of them are still extant. Nay, the enemies of christianity uniformly mention them, as the authentick books of christians; while they oppose their contents. So that there is the fullest proof that all the twenty-seven books now collected in the New Testament were received, and read in the assemblies of christians, in the second century; except the epistle to the

Hebrews, the Epistle of James, the second Epistle of Peter, the second and third of John; that of Jude, and the Revelation of John; and that most of these, if not all, were extant and well known, though not generally received as divinely inspired.

What then did Mr. P. mean by roundly asserting, 'that there was no such book as the New Testament 'till more than three hundred years after Christ?' This appears at first sight one of the most daring falsehoods that ever was ventured upon: but in fact it is a *mere quibble*, though too evidently intended to deceive. Because, if you prove separately every book to have existed, and all but one to have been received as the word of God: still the New Testament did not exist as a book and as it now stands. This is the only way, I confidently affirm, in which Mr. P. can exculpate himself from the charge of direct falsehood: and this is not a very creditable way of opposing other men, whom he reviles as liars and impostors.

Who doubts the authenticity of other ancient books, because the original manuscripts are not forth coming? Who could distinguish them from other ancient manuscripts if they were? He, who demands a kind of proof, which the nature of the cause renders *impossible*, is determined that no *possible* evidence shall convince him.*

If these books had not from the first been received as genuine; they could never afterwards have obtained that character, much less have acquired the title of the

* P. ii. p. 89.

word of God: for that jealous and scrupulous investigation, which Mr. P. degrades under the idea of *voting*, proves the impossibility of a forgery escaping detection, and being received as a divine revelation.

Had the books, which bear the name of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, or Peter, been published after their death, when they had never before been heard of, would not the several persons and churches, to which some of them were addressed; and christians in general, as supposed to have been acquainted with them during the lives of the apostles and evangelists, have declared them to be forgeries? The claim, it is evident, would have been absurd, and the imposture manifest. The doubts that arose concerning the epistle to the Hebrews, which bears not the name of Paul; that of James, which perhaps was *then* thought, as it has *since* been, irreconcileable with Paul's doctrine; the second Epistle of Peter, which seems to have been written just before his death; and the second and third of John, in which he only calls himself the Elder, prove this. Some of these books, and perhaps the Revelation of John, might not be generally known among christians, during the life-time of their authors, or they might not be publickly acknowledged by them: and therefore, after their death, the scrupulous caution of the church long hesitated about admitting them as genuine and divine; till *internal evidence* fully convinced the most accurate judges, that they were entitled to that regard.

At what time, and in what manner, then could it

be possible to fabricate the apostolical epistles, and gain them credit as well known and received from the days of their writers? and how could histories and epistles be forged, so exactly to tally together in the most minute circumstances, without the least appearance of design? If ever books had internal marks of being *genuine*, which no rational man on diligent perusal can doubt; the Acts of the Apostles, and St. Paul's epistles have those marks: and I believe it would be impossible, for all the genius of all the knaves on earth combined together, to write an history, and a number of epistles, so manifestly open, frank, artless, and often immethodical; and yet to make the one so perfectly to confirm the other. If the priests and rulers of the church should have attempted such an imposition, would the people have unanimously consented to the fraud? And would Jews, Pagans, and Hereticks have allowed the forgeries of christians to be genuine and ancient books? A very probable story indeed is devised by our Oracle of Reason, when he supposes, that the very church which held purgatory, dispensations, and other anti-christian tenets, fabricated the epistles which predict and condemn those abuses! But 'the church could write, and therefore could fabricate 'them!' Let Mr. P. or his friends try to fabricate some epistles, and ascribe them to Luther, Calvin, Beza, Cranmer, or some of the reformers; and even allowing them the *immense advantage of saying, they were never before published*, they will soon find it much easier to *write*, than to *establish a literary forgery!*

The resurrection of Christ has been proved; and the apostles shewn to have been faithful witnesses. Two of the gospels were written by them, and have evidently been extant from their days; as all competent judges must allow: and the other two gospels were written by the companions of the apostles. These were published when the facts were recent; and no enemy, for nearly four hundred years afterwards attempted to *disprove* them. The miracles wrought by the apostles and evangelists confirmed the truth of the narrative. In these books the words of Christ are contained; and they authenticate all the rest of the Scripture * We have seen, that he always quoted every part of the Old Testament as the word of God; and he gave *his apostles* the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that whatever they bound or loosed on earth, should be bound or loosed in heaven. This could only be done by their *doctrine;* and all human censures and absolutions are valid, so far as they agree with the doctrine of the apostles, and no further. But where shall we find this doctrine except in their writings? Those writings contain also internal proof both of being genuine and divine; and are confirmed to us by prophecies, which have been fulfilling ever since. Whatever men may now say of the sacred writers, they always speak of themselves and each other, as

---

* Our Lord says, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have "believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not *his* "*writings*, how shall ye believe my words?" (John v. 46, 47.) Does not this decide that the books of Moses are *genuine*, with all that believe the testimony of Christ?

declaring the truth of God to mankind, and they demand credit and obedience as the messengers and ambassadors of Christ. On every account, therefore, we have good reason, independently of *ancient opinion*, to receive the whole Scripture as the infallible word of God.—But 'Christ did not write his own life.'* What then? If he had, would not its authenticity or genuineness have been as liable to be questioned, as Matthew's or John's life of him? This again leads to universal scepticism, and is replete with most arrogant presumption.

Upon the whole, there is not a religion in the world at this day, except christianity, that so much as pretends to be a revelation from God, demonstrated by miracles and prophecies; and rendered successful by a divine power accompanying unarmed unlettered men, preaching a holy doctrine, in the midst of potent and violent enemies, and patiently enduring all sufferings, even to death in the cause. The Jews adhere to the Old Testament; but that evidently foretels and terminates in the New. Mahomet, respecting whom Mr. P. has spoken with great incorrectness, propagated even his licentious religion by the sword, and with many advantages had very little success, till he adopted that measure: and there are no other candidates, which even Mr. P. thought worthy to be mentioned. What hath therefore been discoursed, concerning revelation, miracles, prophecy, and the

* P. i. p. 8.

canon of Scripture, contains such a mass of evidence in proof of christianity, as never was, nor can pretend to be, equalled by the advocates for any other religion in the world.

CHAPTER V.

MYSTERY.

MR. P. allows, 'in one sense, that every thing is a 'mystery to us:—that we, however, know as much 'as is necessary for us;—and that it is better the Cre-'ator should perform all for us, than that we should 'be let into the secret.' Yet he calls 'mystery the an-'tagonist of truth,'—'a fog of human invention that 'obscures truth, and represents it in distortion.'* 'To believe there is a God may be *easy*, or *necessa-'ry;*' though atheists would dispute that point: but to know the nature and perfections of God is another matter. The pagan philosopher, who averred 'that 'the more he thought of the Deity, the less he seem-'ed to know concerning him,' spake far more reasonably on this subject than modern deists. The religion, that has any connexion with an infinite and incomprehensible God and a boundless eternity, must be in many respects mysterious: unless a *finite* mind can fully understand *infinity*. But Mr. P. repeatedly calls *ethicks religion;* and says '*religious duties* con-

* P. i. p. 54, 55.

'sist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavour-'ing to make our fellow creatures happy.'* Now an atheist may do all this: and is not that a singular definition of *religious duties*, which admits atheists to have been very exemplary in them? No doubt such a religion may be as free from mystery, as any thing in the world can be.

But mystery, in Scripture, signifies something relative to God, and his dealings with us, which could not have been discovered if it had not been revealed; which can only be received by crediting revelation; which can be known no further than God has seen good to discover it; and which is so connected with things unrevealed and incomprehensible, that it cannot be fully understood or explained. The believer therefore *understands the mystery as far as it is revealed*, provided he fully credit the whole divine testimony: but a great deal respecting it still continues undiscovered. He knows it not by reasoning, but by believing; he is still greatly in the dark, and must wait for fuller light till the Lord see good to afford it. In this sense religion must be mysterious; and even Mr. P.'s *revelation*, that is the *external world*, is by his own confession almost as mysterious as the Bible. For on that subject he does not confound *mystery* with *contradiction and absurdity*.

The Scriptures plainly ascribe divine perfections and operations, to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; and use the strongest language of *person-*

* P. i. p. 4.

ality respecting each of them, even in plain commands and promises: and as there can be but one infinite and eternal God, we infer, that He is revealed as subsisting in three Persons; being Three in one sense, and One in another. But *how these things are*, we cannot comprehend, and should not attempt to explain, further than the oracles of God have done it. The *doctrine* is an article of faith; the *modus* is not. We do not say that one is three, or three one, which is a contradiction: but as man consists of a material body, an animal life, and a rational soul; and is thus threefold in some sense, though strictly one individual: so the Deity is One in essence; but in some mysterious manner is Triune. This allusion is not meant as an *illustration* of the subject, for it cannot be illustrated; but it shews, that there is no contradiction in saying that the same Being may be threefold in one sense, and one in another.

A Trinity of *gods* would certainly weaken the belief of one God; but a Trinity of *persons* in the Deity cannot have this effect. Rather it helps and directs the confidence of the believer in the Father's mercy, through the mediation of the Son, and by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit.*

The Deity of Christ is another view of this mystery: and Mr. P.'s testimony to this doctrine, as certainly contained in Scripture, is not unworthy attention; though his representation of it be dis-

* P. ii. p. 101, 102.

torted and erroneous. Even Voltaire would scarcely honour with his *hatred* such professed christians as denied it. Many other mysteries might be considered; but these alone need be mentioned in this place.

CHAPTER VI.

REDEMPTION.

MR. P.'s objections to *redemption by the blood of Christ*, constitute a plain proof that no man can help seeing this doctrine in Scripture, if he have not some previous bias on his mind respecting it.

Unless we understand the moral character of God, and the perfect holiness required by his righteous law, and are convinced of our own sinfulness and desert of wrath and condemnation; and unless we allow that "the world lieth in wickedness," and perceive the utter insufficiency of all that we or any other men can do to remedy the numberless evils which fill the earth: it is impossible we can receive, in a proper manner, the *scriptural doctrine of redemption*. But when these things are clearly discerned, and a correspondent disposition of heart is produced: the whole appears to be the plan of infinite wisdom, to display the honour of the divine law, justice, and holiness, in shewing mercy to the vilest transgressors. The Lord, in this wonderful manner, most emphatically shews his hatred of sin, and his judgment of its desert; while he pardons and saves sinners: and thus he makes way for producing in our hearts deep humiliation, dread

and hatred of sin, cheering hope of mercy, and lively love and gratitude, in entire harmony. At the same time, all intelligent beings in the universe, how many soever there are or may hereafter be, will to eternal ages learn from this subject the whole character of God; and receive such instructions concerning his harmonious perfections, as must prove a vast accession to their felicity, and redound exceedingly to his glory.

With these sublime thoughts before us, to what do Mr. P.'s objections amount? Would Satan's exhibiting himself on a cross, in the shape of a serpent, as a punishment for tempting our first parents, have displayed the evil of *our* sins, the justice of God in condemning the wicked, and his mercy in saving believers? Would it have answered one single end, for which the Scriptures inform us the Son of God was manifested?* And in what respect does Satan now triumph; when by the death of Christ his kingdom is subverted, his cause ruined, and his eternal shame and misery increased? The whole of Mr. P.'s argument on this head implies the supposition, that sin does not deserve punishment, that man is not a sinner, or that it is not proper God should regard the glory of his justice and holiness in shewing mercy.—The shocking charge of *suicide* brought against Christ, if he willingly died for our sins, would at least equally fall on every one, who determined to die, rather than deny the truth, betray a good cause, or desert his friends and country.—The bounty of providence ought indeed to

* P. i. p. 12, 13.

awaken our gratitude: but unless conscious of our unworthiness, we are not apt to be very thankful; and if we know ourselves, we shall not be animated to *cheerful gratitude*, till confidence of forgiveness and salvation be inspired.

Did we think ourselves so *good*, as to be *worthy* that the Son of God should come and die for us, we should be justly chargeable with *gloomy pride;* but all true believers admire the love of God in this great transaction, *because they know themselves unworthy of the least of his mercies.*

To suffer, though sinless and in the vigour of manhood, as a condemned person, numbered with malefactors, by an ignominious and torturing execution, in the manner marked as *accursed* in the Old Testament, was far more suited to the idea of an *atoning sacrifice*, than any kind of natural death could have been. The pain and shame of crucifixion, with the anguish of spirit expressed by Christ in the garden and on the cross, far better illustrated the wrath of God he endured for us, and which we must otherwise have born for ourselves to eternity, than the common circumstances of death could have done. Being perfectly holy, he was incapable of remorse and stings of conscience; with firm expectation of the joy set before him, he was not liable to despair; and his divine nature, giving infinite value to his temporary sufferings, rendered eternal duration needless. In all other respects, it behoved him as our Surety to suffer all that *our* sins deserved, and not merely the punishment due to Adam's first transgression.

If men have abused the doctrine of the cross, and de-

duced a corrupt theory of human merits from it,* we should learn to distinguish truth from falsehood, and not reject both together. It is absurd to suppose *one sinner can merit for another:* but not, that a holy and glorious person should submit to do and suffer many things for sinners, whose nature he had assumed, in order that it might be honourable to God, for his sake and through his intercession, to shew mercy to them. Did no prince ever favour a subject, who was obnoxious to punishment, for the sake of some near relation, who had performed great services and interposed in his behalf?

The idea of pecuniary redemption is a scriptural illustration of the atonement. No mere creature is master of his own life; no man can be found who has not forfeited it by his own sins: otherwise, he might as justly suffer pain and death, as reduce himself to poverty, by answering for another person; provided he were perfectly free in undertaking such an engagement, and the ends of justice could be answered by it. *Moral justice* is ambiguous: but *distributive justice* may and does take the innocent for the guilty, whenever the bondsman is arrested for the debt of the principal; and though it does not extend to death, it can only be thence inferred, that this is deemed inexpedient in human society. If an innocent man should suffer the loss of a shilling, or a day's liberty, for the fault of another, without *his own voluntary engagement,* it would be injustice or indiscriminate revenge, as *really*, though not in the *same degree*, as if he were put to death: and it

* P. i. p. 28.

would be extremely difficult to a casuist in such cases to draw the line; and, supposing a previous engagement, to shew exactly where justice ended and indiscriminate revenge began.

We suppose Christ to have been a divine person, "God manifest in the flesh;" and that he voluntarily engaged to magnify the law, and satisfy divine justice, in the stead and for the sake of his people, fully knowing the whole case. Having in our nature been perfectly obedient to the law, and not having forfeited his life by one failure: he had in all respects that right to dispose of it as he pleased, which no other man ever had or can have. The ends of the divine government were completely answered by his death upon the cross: and he most freely laid down his life for us, having power to take it again; in order by his *temporal sufferings* to save an innumerable multitude from *eternal* misery, to the everlasting glory of God. In the fulfilment of this plan, what injustice was done? Indeed the charge is wholly grounded on the false supposition, that Christ was *substituted in our place, without his own free consent.**

After all, Mr. P.'s objections principally arise, (as every other person's do,) from this doctrine's 'representing man as an out-law, an outcast, a beggar, a 'mumper, &c.;' he should have said at once *an hell-deserving sinner*. No man will ever cordially acquiesce in the doctrine, with a proper view of it, till he come in that character for salvation. Then his life will neither be spent in grief, nor the affectation of it:

---

* P. i. p. 24, 25.

but he will rejoice in Christ Jesus, and both relish the comforts, and be supported under the trials, of life, far better than any other person. That doctrine, which to unbelievers appears so *gloomy*, will brighten every prospect, and fill his heart with joy and hope, and his tongue with thankful praises. That opaque cloud, which Mr. P. says the 'person of Christ places be-'tween the understanding and the deity;'* appears to the believer a glorious display of the divine perfections, in a manner and through a *medium* suited to his feeble conceptions, and relieving to his guilty conscience: so that "beholding as in a glass the glory of "the Lord," (in the face or person of Christ,) "he "is changed into the same image from glory to glory, "by the Spirit of the Lord."†

Others of us, as well as Mr. P. have had very childish thoughts of redemption:‡ but "when we became "men we put away childish things;" while he retains and retails them as highly reasonable!

'The christian mythology has five deities; there 'is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy 'Ghost; the god providence, and the goddess nature!' Surely Mr. P. knew, that christians consider the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as one God; and providence, as the superintending care of God over all his creatures. As for *Nature*, she is the Deist's goddess: the Bible says nothing about her *agency*, nor do any of those who "speak according to the oracles "of God."

Mr. P. is little acquainted with serious christians:

---

* P. i. p. 31. † 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. iv. 1—6. ‡ P. i. p. 44.

but, I believe, I may answer for most of them, that they bestow pains, as soon as their children become capable of instruction, in teaching them the doctrine of redemption by the death of Christ, as revealed in the holy Scriptures: and if men called christians teach their children only *morals* and not the *principles of the gospel*, they grievously misunderstand the Bible, and neglect their duty.

I have no objection to Mr. P.'s astronomy, or his opinion concerning a plurality of worlds, considered abstractedly. If these worlds be inhabited by rational creatures, which however probable is merely conjectural, either the inhabitants are sinners, or they are not.—If they be not sinners, they do not want a Saviour: but provided the way of man's salvation be made known to them, it may vastly enlarge their views of the Creator's harmonious perfections, and increase their admiring love and pure felicity. And it signifies not how mean or small the stage was, on which this glorious scene was exhibited; provided the whole obedient creation of God derive advantage from it, and render him eternal praises and adoration. If the supposed inhabitants of any of these worlds be sinners: we are sure that the Lord will not do them injustice: we do not say, that it is impossible for *him* to devise some other way of reconciling infinite justice with the exercise of mercy; though *we* cannot conceive how it can be done: and we do not know, but they may be left without mercy to condign punishment. All reasoning on such grounds is "intruding "into things not seen," by men who are "vainly puff-

"ed up with a fleshly mind."* But for a philosopher, in this Age of Reason, 'to suppose that the in-'finite God must have left the care of all worlds, 'when he came to save one,' is so gross an idea, that one cannot but stand amazed at it! We pretend not to comprehend the Deity; we allow that "without "controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God "manifest in the flesh:" but the attributes of omnipresence and omnipotence must be inseparable from the Godhead; these absolutely exclude such notions as Mr. P. hath started; and I am persuaded they scarcely ever enter the mind of the most unlettered christian; or if they do, they are rejected as gross absurdity, or diabolical suggestions.†

---

* Col. ii. 18. † P. i. p. 63.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INSUFFICIENCY OF DEISM.

MR. P. enlarges on the sufficiency of Deism, and evidently considers it as his principal argument against the Scriptures. 'The creation is the only word of 'God, and natural philosophy the only preaching.' It is certain however, that numbers do not so much as believe there is a God, or that he created and governs the world: so that this *revelation* and *preaching* are not universally intelligible and convincing.

"The invisible things of God, are" indeed "clear-"ly seen from the creation of the world being under-"stood by the things that are made, even his eternal "power and Godhead:" so that atheists and idolaters "are without excuse:" yet it is evident that men have almost as much neglected, misinterpreted, or differed about, this *revelation*, as that contained in the holy Scriptures. Only a very small proportion of the human race have gathered so much as deism from it: and the deists, who profess to believe in one God of infinite perfection, almost universally spring up in places where the Bible is known. They *borrow* or *steal*, or *imperceptibly to themselves acquire at second hand*, their glimmering light, from the very book

against which they oppose it; and in different circumstances, they might have been atheists or idolaters: for this has been the case of almost the whole human species in every age, though probably none have been wholly destitute of all remains of original revelation.

It is unreasonable, to take a very few individuals, who have free access to the Scriptures, but reject a great part of them, as a specimen of the religion men may learn from the creation by the exercise of their understandings. To judge fairly on this subject, we should take our specimen from the inhabitants of new South Wales, or the newly discovered islands in the South sea and Pacifick ocean; where the Bible has never been known: and the history of mankind from the beginning must be adverted to, before we bring in our verdict. For even the pagan moralists borrowed from the Scriptures: and after the æra of christianity, their sentiments on many subjects savour, as it were, of the New Testament.

But how are matters at present, even in Europe, among those who reject the Bible? Have they all recourse to *practical* deism? Is it not evident that they understand Mr. P.'s *revelation* almost as little, as they do that which they have renounced? This also wants *translating*, and *expounding*, or men will misunderstand it. Let the astronomer then become a preacher, and try how far science will go in making *pure deists*. He will soon find, that the husbandman, the artist, and the mechanick, with all the busy and labouring part of mankind, can never spare time, money, or attention, to gain the necessary acquaintance with his principles

and demonstrations, to enable him to begin his *practical deductions*. The bulk of the human species can never be instructed in this way: and even the few, who are not engrossed by business, or sunk in low sensuality, will find the process very tedious, indecisive, and inefficient.

But supposing moral truths, duties, and obligations could, by these or some other means, be clearly defined and established: the rules would want *authority* to enforce them; and men would remain destitute of sufficient motives to urge them forward, in a course that would require immense exertion and self-denial. What could the creation teach us decidedly concerning the moral perfections and government of God, or the *actual* immortality of the soul? This last, after all men's boasted demonstrations, can only be *known, by a discovery of the Creator's determination respecting it:* and even Mr. P. seems to think, uncertainty or doubtfulness is all that can be attained or would be useful on the subject.* Yet he himself in another place calls *doubtfulness the opposite of belief*,† in which he both contradicts the *truth* and *himself:* for *doubtfulness* is the middle point between *believing* and *disbelieving*.—The probability or possibility of a future state is however, as he thinks, all we ought to know: without any acquaintance with the nature of it as happy or miserable, or the influence of our present conduct on our future condition. That is, we are in the dark, and it is best to be so: or in the words of Scrip-

---

* P. ii. p. 100, 101. † P. ii. p. 69.

ture, " men love darkness rather than light because " their deeds are evil." This is deism, all-sufficient deism!

What then can the creation teach a man, concerning the way of finding relief from bitter remorse of conscience? obtaining the pardon of numerous and heinous crimes? finding peace with God and the enjoyment of his favour? gaining the victory over domineering lusts and habits, or strong temptations, or escaping the pollutions and snares of the world? What can we thence learn, which will inspire a sinner's heart with calm reflecting consolation in deep scenes of distress; or enable him to meet death with exulting hope of future felicity?—A poor wretch, having fallen into a pit and broken his bones, lies languishing in agony and at the point of death, for want of assistance: and a passenger instead of helping him out, gravely teaches him how men ought to walk, and look to their steps when they travel on the road; and concludes by saying, ' This is sufficient, and all else is unnecessary!'

Man is evidently in a state of suffering and death: if he reflect at all, he forbodes a future state of retribution, and conscious of guilt he dreads the consequences. If he be so stupid as not to reflect, he wants to be warned, and made sensible of his true character and situation: if he be alarmed, he enquires what he must do to be saved? how he may escape condemnation, and obtain eternal life? Is it enough to say to such a man, All nature teaches us the being of a God: moral principles are rational and obvious: study the creation, practice morality; *possibly* there is a future state, *possibly* you may be happy in it. This is

all you ought to know? Does this fully meet the man's reasonable, important, and anxious enquiries, or at all suit his case?

But the word of God, authenticated by miracles, prophecy, and many infallible proofs, answers in the most explicit manner all the questions we can propose, on subjects so interesting to us; it gives full and express directions, encouragements, and assurances; and points out an adequate remedy and effectual refuge to the vilest of sinners. Thus "life and immortality are "brought to light by the gospel." Let common sense now determine whether these discoveries are unnecessary and useless. Is a pardon useless to a condemned criminal? a physician and a healing medicine to the sick? relief to the indigent, liberty to the captive, or sight to the blind? "Blessed are the poor in "spirit, for their's is the kingdom of God." When the soul is truly humbled for sin, the gospel is more suited to its case, than any illustration can adequately represent; but the self-sufficient and self-wise always did, and always will, secretly or openly, pour contempt upon it. This the Scripture hath predicted; and the conduct and spirit of those who oppose christianity abundantly verify those predictions.—The Bible proposes an adequate remedy to the wants of sinners: and the state of the world shews it to be extremely wanted. But Deism can pretend to nothing of the kind: and it is therefore indeterminate, inefficacious, and obscure, unsuitable to man's condition and character; and though abstractedly it may be said to be good as far as it goes, yet it is *wholly insufficient for all religious purposes in the present lapsed state of human nature.*

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NATURE AND TENDENCY OF CHRISTIANITY.

MR. P. has, *disingenuously* and *studiously* as far as a man can judge, confounded christianity with all the abuses and perversions of it; and with all the crimes that *masked* atheists have taken occasion from it to perpetrate. Let him, however, have full licence to abuse domineering churchmen and persecuting priests; let him exhaust his rhetorick in declaiming against purgatory, penances, and dispensations; or that kind of christianity which is inimical to solid learning and sober enquiry. But let not the pure religion of Scripture be blamed for those things, which are there both expressly predicted, and most severely condemned. I would not even go out of the way, to dispute for establishments, or national religions, though, when connected with an equal toleration, they do not at all cramp free enquiry; and, when properly managed, they secure to the bulk of mankind a measure of religious instruction, which would not otherwise be afforded them.

The religion of the Scriptures must be distinguished, not only from all *corruptions* but from all

appendages; and all *modes of promoting it*, however expedient, which are not expressly commanded. This religion makes known to us the one living and true God; not only in his eternal power and Deity, but also in the mysteries of his nature, and the perfections of his character, as far as we are concerned to know them. Infinite wisdom, justice, purity, faithfulness, goodness, and mercy, harmoniously displayed, are here viewed in connexion with omnipotence, omniscience, unchangeableness, omnipresence, self-existence, and incomprehensible greatness and majesty. The Lord, being thus altogether glorious and lovely, the Creator of our bodies and souls, our continual and bounteous Benefactor, and our moral Governor and Judge, commands us to love him with all our hearts, and to love our neighbour as ourselves: and these comprehensive precepts reach to all our thoughts, words, and actions, and every possible duty to God and man.

This law, universally kept, would produce universal order, peace, and felicity; for it is in all respects, "holy, just, and good." By this rule all our conduct must be tried; and all the other precepts of Scripture are elucidations of it, and applications of its general requirements to our several cases and circumstances.—The Bible reveals also an eternal state of righteous retributions: and as all have broken the holy law of our God, we are no more able of ourselves to escape future condemnation, than we now are to elude the sentence of death; for, like other laws, it requires perfect obedience, and condemns every transgressor. Some information the Scriptures afford us, concerning the man-

ner, in which our race was thus involved in sin and misery: but far more concerning the method of our recovery. The description, there given of our nature and character, does not indeed accord to the soothing speculations of many philosophers: but universal history, observation, and experience prove that they answer exactly to facts; and the more any one studies his own heart, and compares his actions with the perfect law of God, the deeper will his conviction be, that the statement of Scripture is just, and his own self-flattering conclusions erroneous. The view given of the evil and demerit of sin is very offensive to our pride, and alarming to our consciences: yet deep reflection on the subject will convince us, that we cannot estimate, what degree or continuance of punishment crimes committed against God do actually deserve.

These things premised, we observe that the Scriptures especially reveal the plan of salvation for sinners, which infinite wisdom and love have formed and completed. This plan centres in the person of Christ, Emmanuel, God manifested in the flesh; in his righteousness, atonement, mediation, and grace; in his offices of Prophet, High Priest, and King; in his power to "save to the uttermost all that come to God by "him;" and in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and our renewal unto the divine image by his gracious influences.

All things having been made ready, in the obedience, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and his appearance in the presence of God for us: christianity consists in humble repentance of sin; a believ-

ing reliance on the merits and atonement of the Son of God, and on the mercy of the Father through him; a cordial acceptance of Christ in all his characters and offices; and dependance, connected with experience, on the Holy Spirit, for divine illumination, progressive sanctification, and pure consolation, all springing from *regeneration*. Thus the sinner, being converted and reconciled to God, justified by faith, and sealed by the Spirit of adoption, expects the performance of the promises in the use of appointed means; and animated by the motives and encouragements of the gospel, he is inwardly and effectually taught by the "grace of "God, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present "world." Thenceforth "he walks in newness of "life." Love to God in Christ Jesus, and to men for his sake, becomes the temper of his heart, and the business and delight of his life. He is indeed still imperfect, and in a state of conflict: but as far as he acts according to his rule and obligations, he does no harm to any man, but all good to every one; in every way, which is in his power, and consistent with propriety. Humility, meekness, gentleness, forgiveness, benevolence, courteousness, compassion, self-denying active beneficence, sincerity, equity, fidelity, sobriety, temperance, and purity, as well as piety, are the genuine effect of his principles. Were all men true and consistent christians, wars would be impossible; fraud, oppression, slander, licentiousness, contentions, and all the crimes that disturb society, would cease: the stormy ocean of the world would be hushed into a calm: men would sooner lay down their lives for their

enemies, than persecute: they would rather endure wrong, than commit it; or even contest their right, unless required by other duties.

This is assuredly the religion of the Scriptures. These have been, and still are, its effects on thousands: and could those believers, who are now scattered abroad in the world, be collected together into one society, and separated from all other men: such a scene of piety, purity, harmony, and felicity would be witnessed, as has never yet appeared on earth, except in the christian church for a short time after the day of Pentecost. Though even these persons would in many respects come short of their duty, and the genuine tendency of their principles.

Every thing, contrary to this statement, militates against the very end of christianity. No countenance is given in the Bible to persecutions, religious wars or massacres, pious frauds or imprecations: indeed all such things are condemned more severely in it than in any other book in the world. The judgments of God on his impenitent enemies, executed by men *expressly commissioned*, have nothing to do with our general conduct: but to inspire us with abhorrence of sin, which thus provokes a God of infinite goodness and mercy. The whole Scripture teaches us meekness and love of persecutors; love expressed, even by suffering or dying for them, if that could save them from destruction.—*Excommunication* denotes no more than seclusion from religious ordinances and societies, to preserve them pure, and to make the censured person ashamed, that he may be brought to repentance: for we are required not to "count him as an enemy, but

"to admonish him as a brother:" and if any *penal* consequences followed in the primitive times, they were *miraculous*, and consequently cannot be imitated by us.

The system of christianity tends to expand the heart, into the most enlarged and disinterested benevolence that can be conceived: and its effects have been prodigious, notwithstanding abuses, and declension from primitive purity, zeal, and simplicity. The gladiatorial shews, in which thousands of lives were sacrificed, to amuse Roman *ladies*, as well as more vulgar citizens, were never abolished till christanity prevailed against them. Hospitals, either wholly or in great measure, owe their origin to the same powerful cause. The humanity exercised even in war for some centuries past, compared with the savage cruelty of ancient times, is the effect of christian principles. That change of sentiments also, which has taken place in respect to the glory or disgrace due to conquerors; and the very extensive protest made against the abominable slave-trade, and the iniquity of slavery itself when not the punishment of atrocious crimes, are *wholly the result of scriptural principles.*

All therefore, which Mr. P. has alleged on this subject, owes its plausibility to his uniform method of blaming christianity for those very abuses which it most severely reprobates; and of confounding the primitive church with the corrupted churches of subsequent ages; or the *gospel with popery*, which are in most respects as opposite as light and darkness. Yet even corrupted christianity may be *slandered;* and it does not appear, that it is justly chargeable with that

declension in science, which took place after the times of Christ, and issued in barbarous ignorance. Learning was very much declined, before christianity had produced any great effects on the mass of mankind, and before it had at all influenced the Roman and Grecian scholars: and if afterwards superstition was inimical to science; churchmen almost alone preserved some remains of it, and were the chief instruments of at length effecting a revival. Vigilius and Galileo indeed were endangered by popish superstition and bigotry for their discoveries in philosophy: but *they* were professed christians, and one of them a churchman.

It is certain, that the Bible does not discountenance natural knowledge, if preserved in due subordination to revealed truth. "The works of God are great, "sought out of all them that have pleasure there-"in."* It throws no impediment in the way, to prevent improvement in any kind of useful knowledge: though it discourages presumptuous speculations; and exposes the folly of self-wisdom, insatiable curiosity, and vain reasonings about matters too deep for us. For "to man it is said, behold, the fear of the "LORD that is wisdom, and to depart from evil that "is understanding."†

True christianity was never propagated by the sword.—When Peter in his impetuosity smote Malchus, our Lord reproved him, and miraculously healed the wound which he had given: and on a former occasion, when the disciples wanted to call fire from

* Ps. cxi. 2. † Job xxviii. 28.

heaven on the Samaritans, he rebuked them and said, "Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of; for "the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, "but to save them."—I am not concerned to vindicate all that *christians have done*, but merely *what Christ hath enjoined:* and whoever at any time hath used violent measures in promoting the gospel, let him stand condemned, as acting in diametrical opposition to his instructions. It is a certain fact, that the primitive christians prevailed without using any such methods; but if they had propagated christianity, as Mahomet did his imposture, by war and rapine, I would have maintained this distinction; that *he acted according to the principles laid down in the Koran; but they in express opposition to the precepts and principles of the gospel. His* religion therefore was *justly* chargeable with the conduct which it sanctioned and required: christianity would not have been answerable for the base conduct of those who acted against its plain commands; but *they* alone ought to have born the blame.

Mr. P. calls the precepts of the Scripture '*fragments of morality.*'* But in what other book shall we find so complete and perfect a system of man's duty in all respects, enforced with such authority, and such powerful sanctions? He says, 'these fragments 'are irregularly and thinly scattered through these 'books, and make no part of revealed religion!' But was not the law delivered in the most solemn manner from Mount Sinai? and does it not virtually contain

* P. ii. p. 98.

our whole duty to God and man? Is it not the *rule*, the transgression of which is called *sin?* and is not *sin* spoken of as deserving punishment, requiring repentance, and needing forgiveness? Does not the scripture speak every where of Christ, as coming to magnify the *law*, and make atonement for *sin?* Is it not promised, that this *law* shall be written in the heart of all the Lord's true people? Is not this law enforced in its various requirements as branched out into many particular precepts, on all christians, with the most earnest admonitions and exhortations? Are not the fruits of the Spirit coincident with the demands of the law? and is it not said, that, " if any man have not the Spirit of " Christ, he is none of his?" In short love to God and man is the substance of all religion: and the whole plan of redemption, the whole system of the gospel, was intended to put honour on this law; and, after a manner worthy of the divine perfections and government, to reinstate transgressors in the favour of God, and recover them to obedience, in part here, and perfectly in heaven hereafter.

Mr. P. says ' the New Testament teaches nothing ' new on this subject!' We allow that its dictates are also inculcated in the Old Testament, though not with equal clearness and energy: but where else shall we find them? Love of the excellency, and zeal for the honour, of God, with delight in him and gratitude to him, are not taught by pagan moralists, with any tolerable degree of precision and authority. Neither Greeks nor Romans have a word in their languages, properly expressing the scriptural idea of *humility*. The most eminent Gentile writers substitute friendship and love of

our country, which are frequently no more than a modification of self-love, in the place of disinterested and enlarged philanthropy. Even Cicero never decidedly protested against the murderous gladiatorial games, or the exposing of infants: against suicide, or revenge; nor even against unnatural crimes, though sanctioned by elegant and admired poets! even Cicero never inculcated the liberal expenditure of money, in relieving poor destitute plebeians, or alleviating the miseries of slaves and captives, out of pure compassion, without regard to personal credit or advantage. Refined self-love is the source, the centre, the object, and in most cases the rule, even *of his morality;* though he wrote far better on the subject than most of his predecessors. And if subsequent moralitsts have gone somewhat further, we know whence they took their materials.

We allow, that Jewish *magistrates* were directed to retaliate on certain injurious persons: but the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," debarred Jews from private revenge, as much as the express commands of the New Testament do us.—Mr. P. objects to the precept; "If any man smite thee on the "right cheek, turn to him the other also:" that is, 'Bear injuries and insults patiently, though that expose 'thee to more affronts; and enter not into contention, if 'it can be avoided without neglecting other duties.' For proverbial expressions are not to be interpreted like mathematical theorems; and men are ready enough to make exceptions to such general rules. Yet he approves of Solomon's maxim,* in hopes to give the

* Prov. xxv. 21.

Gentiles the credit of it; and does not know, that Paul has quoted it, as the substance of the duty of loving enemies.* No man I suppose, before Mr. P. ever thought we were commanded to love enemies better than friends, and to reward their injuries: but good-will, and acts of kindness when needed, are due to our most cruel persecutors and the vilest criminals; and we ought to pray for their conversion and salvation. This, however, does not interfere with our special love to the righteous, gratitude to benefactors, and tender affection to relatives: for the Lord sends common benefits on the unthankful and evil; but reserves his special blessings for his obedient children.

I have however something further to say to Mr. P. on this subject, in reply to his *liberal* charges against christianity as a persecuting religion. In a paroxysm of zeal and indignation he exclaims; 'It is 'better, far better, that we admitted, if it were possi-'ble, a thousand devils to roam at large and to preach 'publickly the doctrine of devils—than that we should 'permit one such impostor or monster, as Moses,—'and the Bible-prophets, to come with the pretended 'word of God in his mouth, and have credit among 'us.'† Now if Mr. P. could establish a government exactly to his mind, in any country where men resided who reverenced the Bible-prophets, and zealously preached the word of God, would this principle allow him to tolerate them? Would he lay no restraints on men, whom he deemed such mischievous monsters

* Rom. xii. 19—21. † P. ii. p. 47.

and vile impostors; and in case they would not be restrained from preaching, would he not inflict penalties? and if they continued obstinate, would not their contumacy expose them to heavier punishment? and does not this principle ultimately lead to exterminating persecution of all who adhere to the Bible, under the stale pretence that they disturb the peace of the community?

I have indeed long avowed an expectation of persecution, extensive dreadful persecution of real christians carried on by men, who now talk the most about toleration, candour, and liberality of sentiment, and exclaim against the intolerance and bigotry of zealous believers: for they shew no *candour* to men strenuously maintaining the doctrines not long ago distinguished as orthodox.—Some declarations made by the late king of Prussia, concerning the difficulty he found in retaining Voltaire and several others, within the bounds which he prescribed for them; certain recent publications of French philosophers, atheists, and deists; and the strong passage just quoted from Mr. P. tend to confirm this opinion; and it is a subject well worthy the attention of all who sincerely love the Bible.

But at the same time, I avow an abhorrence of all persecution; and would have no man abridged in his civil rights, on account of his religious principles, if in *other respects* he be a peaceable member of the community. The smallest degree of persecution seems to me to contradict the *spirit of the gospel;* nay, all bitterness, contempt, or reviling in controversy; and whatever is not necessary to defend the reader against the misrepresentations of a plausible writer, and the de-

lusions to which he is exposed. On this subject let every one recollect our Lord's words, "Woe be to "the world because of offences; for it must needs be "that offences come; but woe be to that man, by "whom the offence cometh!" For the most plausible argument in Mr. P.'s books, is taken from that very misconduct of christians which our Lord expressly predicted.

Lay the things together, which we have considered. Advert to man's need of revelation, and the reasonableness of expecting one; the incontestable miracles, by which both the Old and New Testaments were introduced; the prophecies contained in the scriptures, and their remarkable accomplishments; the suitableness of christianity to our wants, and the distinct answers it gives to the most interesting enquiries; its evident tendency and actual effects; the sublimity of its truths and the beauty of its precepts; its existence after so many ages, though it has been assaulted most vehemently from without, and disgraced most shamefully within; and the wonderful agreement of our present copies with ancient versions, though they have been handed down to us by Jews and papists:—I say, take all these things together, and I cannot but think they amount to as *full a demonstration, as the subject admits of, that the Bible is the word of God.*

I would now observe in conclusion, that a serious mind is the grand requisite for obtaining satisfaction in an enquiry of this nature. If the reader sincerely desires to be preserved from mistake, and directed into the way of truth: let him give the Bible itself an impartial and diligent investigation. Let him act ac-

cording to the dictates of his conscience without reserve, while he waits for fuller information. Let him use his understanding, and not be determined by his passions and prejudices. Let him ask himself whether he be as willing to be convinced that the Bible is true, as the contrary? And if he be conscious that he is not, let him honestly enquire after the cause of this prejudice, for if pride or love of forbidden objects bias his mind, an impartial verdict cannot be expected. Let no man who would know the will of God, pay the least regard to wit, ridicule, eloquent declamation, or virulent abuse: these suit corrupt nature, but they always tend to obscure the truth, or perplex and mislead the mind. Finally, as the belief of a God is taken for granted by all parties; and as God must in all senses, be the Fountain of knowledge and wisdom; let every enquirer beg of him to strengthen and assist his judgment, to keep his mind unbiassed to enable him to distinguish truth from error, and to guide him in the path of everlasting felicity.

AN

IMPARTIAL STATEMENT

OF THE

SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE,

IN RESPECT OF

CIVIL GOVERNMENT,

AND

THE DUTIES OF SUBJECTS.

He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him. Prov. xviii. 13.

Vulgus ex veritate pauca, ex opinione multa, æstimat.

Cicero.

THIRD EDITION.

AN

IMPARTIAL STATEMENT, &c.

CHAPTER I.

PROPOSITIONS CONCERNING CIVIL GOVERNMENT AS THE ORDINANCE OF GOD.

I. IT is the evident doctrine of scripture, that government is the appointment of God, to be a restraint on man's selfishness, and to preserve a measure of order in the world, notwithstanding human depravity. Rulers are, therefore, called "God's ministers for good "to those that do well," and "revengers, to execute "wrath on evil doers."—So that government, as it subsists among men, is in fact both a consequence, and a demonstration, of our fallen state; and the inconveniences resulting from the abuse of it should be patiently endured, because we are sinners. The controversies concerning the origin of government, as the "ordinance of man," though important in politicks, are *in this respect* of no consequence: for God as the Author of our rational nature, and the supreme Ruler of the world, is the Fountain of all subordinate authority; by whatever second causes he hath been

pleased to confer it. It is his revealed will that there should be rulers armed with power to enforce obedience: his providence hath concurred with his word by establishing and maintaining government throughout the earth: and, though coercive power originated from sin, yet in the present state of human nature, its advantages are so many, that the worst form of government, and administered in the worst manner, is preferable to entire anarchy, for the people at large.

II. The scripture does not prescribe any particular form of government as of divine right and universal obligation. Regal or imperial authority was most common when those precepts were penned that relate to this subject; and therefore that is generally mentioned: yet they may be equally applied to other established forms; nor do they seem absolutely intended to decide that regal authority is in all cases most eligible. Yet on the other hand, when the Lord by Samuel shewed Israel "the manner of kings,"* he contrasted the *monarchs* of the earth with those holy men whom he had immediately appointed to judge his chosen people: not *monarchy* itself with other forms of government, as established in the ordinary course of human affairs. Man's reason and self-love suffice for the regulation of such matters; and the divine decision of this question would in many cases have increased the embarrassment of conscientious persons. So that they, who have attempted to prove, from Scripture, the exclusive divine right of any one form of government, have in different ways prejudiced men against the truth, and

* 1 Sam. viii.

furnished a pretence to those who refuse "to be sub-"ject to principalities and powers."

III. The established form of government in every country is, *for the time*, of divine authority; by whatever method the power hath been acquired, and whatever may be the conduct of the rulers. That, which in one sense is an "ordinance of man," is, in another sense, "ordained of God," for "there is no power "but of God." He hath appointed government, and his providence determines who shall govern: and it should be carefully noted that when the inspired apostles gave these instructions, Nero, that monster of iniquity, filled the imperial throne. The way, in which the Roman emperors obtained their dominion, the use which they made of it, and the character of the reigning prince, were as exceptionable as possible: yet even such powers were for the time "ordained of God;" doubtless as a righteous judgment on the guilty nations: and though proper remedies may (as we shall see) be applied to such evils, yet in the mean time submission to God's appointment is required of us; and we should always prefer suffering to sin.

IV. The scripture every where leads us to expect that many things will be reprehensible in the conduct of rulers. They have the same evil nature as their subjects, with far more to inflame their passions, and to prompt to self-indulgence: and, as they are placed in the most conspicuous station, it cannot be surprising that objections may justly be made to many parts of their private character, or publick administration: for who could endure so severe a scrutiny, as is now generally made into their conduct and measures? So that

when revolutions take place, one sinner succeeds another in the post of *temptation* and *observation;* inordinate self-love continues to produce it's effects, and murmurs and clamours are soon excited; as every man acquainted with human nature might have foreseen.

Indeed, if rulers were perfect in wisdom and justice, their *equal* administration would counteract the selfishness of multitudes; and the ambition or avarice of men, more distinguished by abilities than integrity, being disappointed, they would soon devise methods of exciting discontent: even as the laws and providential dispensations of God himself are far from giving satisfaction to mankind. But as matters now stand, unless the selfishness of many such persons were in some measure gratified, and they were thus engaged to support the existing government in every country *for their own emolument*, it would soon be subverted by the combined force of ambition, avarice, designing faction, and ignorant discontent, however prudent and equitable it were: for *disinterested patriotism* is a very rare thing indeed, at all times, and in all places. When this had produced a revolution, the prevailing party must take the same method of supporting their authority, or else it would be speedily subverted, and perpetual convulsions would be the inevitable consequence: for did not interested motives attach multitudes to the party of the rulers, a vast majority would always oppose their measures, from envy of their preeminence, or hope of wresting it out of their hands. So that a government, conducted in a manner that seems in speculation perfectly right, can only be *ideal*, so long as men in general continue ambitious, covetous, designing, and selfish.

Every reflecting person must also know that the hardships and disadvantages of those things which have been tried are sensibly felt; whereas men in general imagine that situations of which they have had no experience are exempt from grievances; yet they often afterwards find in them such as are still more insupportable. Indeed one inconvenience in our present condition *naturally* impresses our minds with greater force than twenty advantages by which it is counterbalanced: for this is the fault of our rebellious ungrateful hearts in every thing; as well as in that particular which is the subject of our present enquiry.

And here I would for a moment digress from my plan to observe, that numbers seem to think only of the burdens and inconveniences of our present government, without duly estimating the manifold benefits enjoyed under it: but whatever human wisdom may hereafter effect, or, rather, whatever a kind Providence may hereafter confer on some favoured nation, or on mankind in general, the fact is incontrovertible, that no country hitherto, from the beginning of the world, has so long enjoyed such substantial and numerous advantages, with so few real grievances, as Britain has done; though a contrary inference might naturally be drawn from the murmurs and complaints which are made by great numbers. Improvements may no doubt be made by peaceable means: but should *great* and *violent* innovations take place, experience will probably shew that evils more formidable than we have hitherto known, will be the unexpected and unavoidable consequence.

CHAPTER II.

THINGS NOT THE DUTY OF SUBJECTS TO THEIR RULERS.

I. THE laws of men ought not to be obeyed when they require those things which are contrary to the commandments of God. "Whether it be right to "hearken to you more than unto God, judge ye." We may indeed be mistaken in our judgment, and our scruples may be groundless; but conscience is our immediate rule of action, and no human authority can justify us in violating its decisions, whatever painful consequences may ensue from adhering to them. Yet we should be open to conviction, and careful in examining the grounds of our opinions; that our errors may be rectified, and our consciences regulated according to the word of God.

II. We must not flatter the persons, vindicate the crimes, or subserve the vices, of our superiors. When such complaisance or such services are expected, it becomes a man's duty to renounce the advantages of his situation, and to venture the displeasure of his prince, by a conscientious refusal: and some persons (as counsellors, and ministers of religion) ought on

these occasions to express their disapprobation by faithful and plain expostulations.

III. We are not required to renounce the exercise of our judgment in respect of the characters and measures of our rulers. Our *private* prayers, and several other duties must be regulated by our sentiments in these matters. Nor are we bound to express our approbation of all those things that come to our knowledge; though we should be cautious how we credit the reports that are circulated, or form our judgment by them. In some cases it may be proper for us to express a disapprobation of publick measures; that is, as far as the constitution of the country authorizes our inteference. Members of Parliament, and those who elect them, may in this land properly express a dislike to the measures of government, when they are exercising their distinct privileges: and in some cases it may be very right to concur in petitions for the redress of grievances; provided it be done peaceably, and without the appearance of a combination to overawe the legislature, or the executive power.

IV. It is not, at all times, necessary or expedient for us to recede from our civil rights, or to wave the protection of the laws against the oppression of magistrates: St. Paul repeatedly insisted on his legal privilege as a Roman citizen; and indeed, the security of his brethren, the welfare of the community, as well as his own exemption from needless suffering, rendered it proper that the attention of the magistrates should thus be directed to those laws which they wantonly violated, while they professed to administer justice according to them. But I can recollect no in-

stance, in which the servants of God protested against the hardships which they endured, by the execution of *subsisting laws*, though manifestly iniquitous.

V. We may peaceably concur in such alterations in the government, or the publick administration, as are introduced in a *legal* and constitutional manner, without fraud or violence, for the increase of liberty and security, and for the benefit of mankind. Nay, I apprehend, that we *ought* to assist in promoting such desirable ends; that is, *according to the duty of our station in the community, and no further*. But, whatever good may eventually be deduced from violent convulsions and sudden revolutions, when power has been exceedingly abused, so many evils must be done and suffered in effecting them, that a conscientious person would choose to stand at a distance, and leave worldly people to settle such matters as they can: and if he be constrained to shew a preference to one party, according to his deliberate judgment, he should evince a disregard to secular advantages, and set an example of moderation, candour, and love of peace, to those around him. The conduct of our Lord, of his apostles, and of the primitive christians, confirms these inferences from the precepts of scripture: the prophets, under the Old Testament, maintained the same conduct amidst the revolutions in the kingdom of Israel; except when they were especially commissioned from God to oppose the idolatry, or reprove the crimes, of those in authority. Even David, after he was anointed to be king of God's people, left it to Providence to fulfil the promises made to him: and, when Saul's treachery and injustice constrained

him to take measures for his own defence, he repeatedly refused to compass his deliverance and advancement, by injuring the person of his cruel persecutor, or by allowing his friends to do it: yet this revolution was expressly determined by the Lord, and was necessary for the welfare of Israel, as well as for the safety of David himself.

It is not here inculcated that the duties of christians are, strictly speaking, different from those of other men; but, that they *alone* are disposed to attend to their duty, when pointed out to them. The supposition of tyranny and oppression on the one hand, and of faction and interested opposition on the other, implies that most men act from selfish principles, and very few in comparison from a regard to the will of God. This conscientious remnant may, therefore, with exact propriety withdraw from the fierce contests of ambitious, covetous, and designing men, if the duties of their station and the love of their neighbours do not require their interference. Such violent convulsions and struggles for dominion would cease, if men in general were *real* christians: but as that is not the case, the men of the world have commonly the largest share in conducting publick affairs: and, while we attend to the duties of our station in the church and the community, it is no more required of us to go *out of our way* to take a part in the contests of princes, senates, or nations, than it is, to turn aside and neglect our business to join in an affray in the street through which we pass.

CHAPTER III.

DUTIES INCUMBENT ON US TO OUR RULERS, AND IN RESPECT OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

I. MINISTERS are charged "to put" the people in "mind to be subject to principalities and powers, and "to obey magistrates;"* not only "for wrath," or the dread of punishment from man, "but also for con-"science' sake;"† and "to submit to every ordinance "of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the "king as supreme, or to governors as sent by him;— "for so is the will of God."‡ These precepts evidently require obedience in all things consistent with a good conscience: and the supposition, that they only enjoin subjection to *equitable* laws, absurdly implies that every person is a competent and constituted judge of the equity and reasonableness of all the laws of his country, and may determine for himself whether they are obligatory upon him or not! Now self-love alone will influence most men to complain of those laws, as unjust and grievous, which interfere with their eager pursuit of wealth, distinction, or indulgence: so that

---

* Tit. iii. 1. † Rom. xiii. 5. ‡ 1 Pet. ii. 13—17.

this one position, if universally reduced to practice, would subvert all government, and annihilate every exercise of coercive authority. What parent or master could rule his own household, if his children and servants might determine without appeal which of his commands were reasonable and obligatory, and which were not? This would not only destroy all subordination, but would render society like an inverted pyramid; constituting all the inferior relations, law-givers, and judges over their superiors, who must previously enquire of every individual what commands he would choose to obey!

Indeed this *political* notion admirably accords with the *religious* principles of such persons as exalt their own reasonings above divine revelation, make their scanty comprehension the measure of the mysteries of the Godhead, and their weakness the standard of his omnipotence: who attempt to improve the word of God by their vain conjectures, and presumptuously sit in judgment on his laws, decrees, and dispensations; as if He were accountable to them, not they to Him. But all, who reverence the word and the authority of the Lord, may surely perceive the fallacy of such a mode of reasoning, as tends to invert the divinely constituted order of things, throughout the whole creation.

The government, rulers, and laws, which subsisted when these precepts were given; the hardships to which the primitive christians were exposed from them; and their meek, submissive conduct combine in demonstrating that such vague limitations were never intended. But if obedience be required even to corrupt magistrates and oppressive laws, in the general course

of things; and if disobedience in such circumstances imply rebellion against the command and providence of God; no doubt they must be still more criminal who disobey such rulers as are, upon the whole, equitable and gentle, and such a system of laws as is salutary and beneficial—because they are not perfectly impartial or unexceptionable.

II. We are required to submit to the providence of God, as to the form of government established over us, while it actually subsists. It has been shewn that we may, *according to the duty of our stations*, concur in peaceably introducing salutary alterations; and it may be added that when changes have taken place, whether they accord with our sentiments or not, we ought to yield obedience to those advanced to authority, as far as other obligations will admit of it. But it cannot consist with submission to the providence of God, to attempt the *illegal* and *violent* subversion of any existing government: in thus "resisting the pow-" er, we resist the ordinance of God." It is true that in mixed governments (such as ours is) one part of the constitutional legislature may *legally* resist the encroachments of the other: thus christians, in the capacity of senators, may regularly oppose those measures of the executive power which they deem injurious to the community. Nay, in some circumstances one part of the legislature may be engaged in hostilities against the other: in this case, "unresisting submission "to the powers that be" does not require us to abet the injustice, tyranny, or violence of any branch of the government: nor does it at all decide to which of them our subjection is due. A peaceable neutrality is most

advisable in such circumstances, if it can be maintained; or even the office of peace-maker if a man have sufficient influence, but if it be indisputably manifest on which side truth and justice lie; if a man be constrained to shew which party he favours; or if he deem himself bound in conscience to take an active part, from love to his country and to mankind: he will find it requisite to watch his own heart very carefully, to repress every selfish and malignant passion, and to follow after and inculcate moderation, lenity, and forgiveness of injuries. But even this extreme case differs widely from a *violent*, *officious*, and *factious* opposition, *in toto*, against an united subsisting government; which must always involve rebellion against the providence and command of God.

When Israel rejected the Lord in rejecting Samuel, their sin did not consist in prefering monarchy to the authority of judges, but in want of submission to the will of God, from a vain desire of being like the nations of the earth. They despised their peculiar blessings, deemed their trivial grievances intolerable, and fancied that a change of government would vastly add to their felicity. And had the nation, after the advancement of David's family to the throne, insisted in the same manner on a republican government, because some nations prospered under that form; their rebellion against God would have been the same, their caprice, discontent, and ingratitude would have merited similar rebukes; and perhaps they would have obtained their choice as their punishment.

In general, it is our duty to submit quietly to the existing government, so long as it subsists entire, and is able to protect us: but in civil contests this general

rule becomes very difficult in the application: yet sober reflection, a tender conscience, an upright heart, and a dependance on divine teaching, will render a man's path plain before him from day to day: and the comprehensive brevity of scripture did not admit of particular rules being given for all such exempt cases.

Nor would I be positive that the command of "un-" resisting obedience to the powers that be," will admit of no further exception in any possible circumstances. The iron rod of cruel oppression may be so severely felt that a whole nation, as one man, may be roused to an united opposition to it, and the ruling party then becomes a mere faction in the state. But it is not to our present purpose to inquire whether, in this case, a conscientious man be absolutely forbidden to concur in promoting the revolution, for which the *unanimous* voice of a nation calls aloud.—This, we may confidently affirm, is not the case, or like to be, in these kingdoms: as nothing but extreme tyranny, to which no *legal* remedy can be applied, ever reduces matters to such an extremity: and in all other circumstances at least I apprehend, the rules laid down will be found scriptural. Indeed, there is scarcely a general precept concerning relative duties, in which common sense, and a deep acquaintance with the scripture, would not constrain us to allow of an exception, in some conceivable circumstances. It is possible that a parent may act in so infatuated, profligate, or cruel a manner, that obedience, in things not absolutely sinful, might be injurious to him, his son, and the whole family: yet this does not absolve children from their obligations to obedience in ordinary circumstances, even though

their parent's conduct and commands be liable to just exception.

III. We are expressly required to pay tribute and custom, for the support of government. Our Lord taught the Jews to "render to Cesar the things which "were Cesar's," as well as "to God the things which "were God's:" though Judea became subject to the Roman emperors by conquest, which is perhaps the worst of all titles to authority. The apostle gave the same instruction to christians,* though many iniquitous and oppressive taxes were imposed by the emperors and their deputies, which were collected with most grievous extortion, to the enriching of a few individuals beyond modern conception, and to the impoverishing of millions. But no exception was made on that account: for christians ought very little to regard such matters; they should be satisfied with their better portion even under persecution; and be very thankful for religious liberty, though hardly dealt with in other things. As government cannot be supported without great expence, and as it produces such immense advantages to us; so the payment of taxes is as necessary to strict probity, as the discharge of other debts; nor can it consist with a good conscience, *in any way or degree*, to defraud the revenue, or to share in the plunder of those who do. All evasion in this matter involves in it much prevarication and disingenuousness: some kinds of it countenance a set of men whose principles and conduct are inimical in the extreme to

* Rom. xiii. 6, 7.

the peace of the community: and as the government will be sure by one tax or other to raise the requisite sums, so he who fraudently withholds a part of his quota constrains his more conscientious neighbour to pay it for him: how then does he love him as himself? or do to others as he would they should do to him?

To argue that taxes *legally* imposed are not due, because they are partial and excessive, involves the absurdity before developed; for who does not feel a disposition to object to that tax, which bears hard on himself? or who, almost, would pay taxes adequate to the publick emergencies under the most frugal administration, if every one might determine for himself which taxes were equal and proper to be paid, and which were not? On such a plan no government on earth could be conducted: and where shall we draw the line? —In fact, when taxes are really partial and oppressive, legal methods may be used to get them reduced, changed, or taken off: but till this can be done, it behoves us to bear the cross with meekness and patience; to pay them punctually, and to use no fraudulent methods of obtaining relief from our burdens.

IV. It is our indispensable duty to honour our rulers, and to behave with respect and deference towards them.* This certainly forbids us to accuse them falsely, to ridicule their real or supposed; infirmities, or to endeavour to bring their characters and authority into contempt: nor can it consist even with mentioning their faults or mistakes without necessity, or in order to de-

* 1 Pet. ii. 17.

grade them in the publick opinion. Our sentiments of men and measures are not always in our own power; but the external expression of them should be restrained or regulated by propriety, and the nature of our relation to them. A dutiful son may greatly disapprove of some things in the conduct of his father: but will he circulate the report in order to expose him? will he industriously hold him up to contempt, ridicule, and reproach? will he not rather endeavour to conceal, or palliate, his misconduct, or contrast it with his virtues? —and if this be impracticable, will he not be deeply concerned for his disgrace? (after the approved conduct of Shem and Japheth, and not after that of undutiful Ham.)* Such ought to be our conduct towards those whom the providence of God hath placed in authority over us, and whom his word hath commanded us to honour. He hath made no exception to this precept on account of the real or supposed criminality of rulers, for this obvious reason, that no ruler can possibly be found whose conduct would not afford a factious person an handle for obloquy and derision: even as no parent can behave so well but that an undutiful son will find something to object to, or turn to ridicule.

Indeed imagination can scarcely form an idea of worse rulers than they who possessed the authority when these commands were given: yet even in such circumstances the more holy men are, the less disposed will they be "to bring against them a railing "accusation;"† which Michael the archangel would not

* Gen. ix. 20—23. † Jude ix.

do even against the devil himself; so that "speaking "evil of dignities, and despising dominion," is contrary to the holiness of angels, the precepts of scripture, the example of Christ, and the practice of the primitive church when groaning under the most cruel persecution. But if this be so unchristian when rulers are manifestly iniquitous and oppressive, it must be still more inexcusable when their conduct and administration are upon the whole commendable: this accords to scarcely any example in scripture, except that of Korah and his company, and that of the vile antinomians whom Peter and Jude so strenuously opposed. Who would think that his son honoured him, if he allowed his tongue and pen that unbridled licence, in animadverting on all his actions, which even some, "who "seem to be religious," use concerning their civil governors? Yet the command to honour the king, is as express, as that to honour father and mother; and as obligatory on every man's conscience.

V. We are expressly required to "pray for kings, "and all that are in authority."* When this command was given, the civil governors were heathens, tyrants, and persecutors: yet, as the captive Jews were directed to pray for the peace of Babylon, that in the peace of that city they might have peace,—so christians were instructed to pray for their rulers, that they might "lead "a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and hon-"esty;" for "the king's heart is in the hand of the "Lord," and it may be expected that in answer to the

* 1 Tim. ii. 2

prayers of his people he will influence him to adopt salutary measures. So that a wise regard to the peace of the church and the publick welfare, as well as good-will to the persons of princes, will always dictate sincere and fervent prayers for blessings, spiritual and temporal, on their persons and families, and for success to all their measures; except we evidently perceive them to be engaged in unjustifiable and pernicious undertakings; and then, instead of expressing our disapprobation in virulent invectives, or bitter complaints, we should earnestly intreat the Lord to withdraw them from their purpose, and to dispose them to hearken to more salutary counsels. Indeed, when this duty is *conscientiously performed from the heart*, it has a powerful tendency to calm our spirits, and to render us averse to turbulent opposition; and it is by far the most becoming and efficacious weapon of our warfare, though too little made use of.

VI. We are commanded "to study," or *to be ambitious*, "to be quiet, and to mind our own busi-"ness;" "to be content with such things as we "have;" "to fear God and the king, and not to med-"dle with those who are given to change;" to consider "that we have here no continuing city," for the christian's "citizenship is in heaven;" that "we are "strangers and pilgrims on earth;" that "in the world "we must have tribulation," let who will govern it; that we must not love the world, or any of its idolized possessions, distinctions, or enjoyments; and that we must "not mind high things," or "seek them" for ourselves.

Indeed every station has its proper duties, and a man may serve God in almost any one; provided he do not officiously *intrude* himself into it. Saints in Cæsar's household had employments that differed from those of saints in an obscure village. The Proconsul Paulus had duties to perform, of another nature than those of the Apostle Paul. David "served his gene-" ration, by the will of God," as king of Israel; Daniel as prime minister of the Babylonian, and afterwards of the Persian, monarchy; and Nehemiah as governor of Judea. Thus christians may serve God as senators, magistrates, or ministers of state; or as kings or emperors, if properly called to it. A prophet may deliver the Lord's message in the plainest language to the proudest monarch; and Paul the prisoner was performing his duty when he caused his wicked judge to tremble by his faithful admonitions.

But surely if the apostles would not "leave the "word of God to serve tables," though a very good work in itself, ministers of the gospel ought not to intermit their important labours to dispute about politicks or to attempt the reformation or subversion of governments, or to unite with heretical, infidel, or irreligious persons, because their sentiments coincide in these secular concerns. They seem to have nothing to do in such questions, but to instruct the people from the word of God, in this, as well as other parts of their duty; to set them an example of a quiet and peaceable behaviour; and to assist their prayers for kings and all in authority.

Nor should private christians relax their diligence in attending on divine ordinances, mutual edification,

and the duties of their several relations in life; to form such associations, or concert such measures, as not only excite the jealously of rulers, but induce the world to conclude that they are as selfish and ambitious as their irreligious neighbours; and in many other ways give the enemies of the gospel an occasion of speaking evil of them, and the holy doctrine they profess. On the contrary, it behoves us in our several stations to support that Government which protects and tolerates us: for "the world lieth in the wicked one," and it is absurd to expect more favour in it than protection and toleration.

We profess to seek heavenly treasures and honours; and we should not seem desirous of the perishing distinctions of this world, which commonly ensnare those who obtain them: if we are christians indeed, we are travelling to heaven; and all our earthly prosperity or adversity will soon be swallowed up in the joys of eternity: if we can do any good by the way, we should readily embrace the opportunity; if any thing contrary to our consciences be required of us, we should meekly refuse compliance; if we be abridged in our civil privileges, or have hard measure from the world, let us not marvel or murmur, but bear it patiently and cheerfully, as the disciples of a crucified Redeemer. This conduct will most conduce to our comfort and edification; and best "adorn the "gospel of God our Saviour," by "putting to silence "the ignorance of foolish men.—"

Though liberty, as distinguished from licentiousness and anarchy, liberty civil and religious, personal and political, be very desirable, even to the utmost extent that human nature in its present state can bear,

and that can consist with God's plan of subordination, which is manifest in all his works and all his word; and though we should aim, by every peaceable and proper method, to promote it in every land: yet we should shew a decided preference to that liberty which Christ bestows on his redeemed people; for without this, the most celebrated and successful champion for civil liberty must continue for ever the abject slave of sin and Satan.

VII. Lastly, It becomes us to "sanctify the Lord "of hosts himself; and to let him be our fear;" that humbly accepting of his salvation, trusting in his mercy, grace, and providence, committing all our concerns into his hands, valuing nothing in comparison of his love, fearing nothing but his frown; we may make it our great business to glorify him by our worship and obedience. Thus we should seek deliverance from those fluctuating hopes and fears which agitate the minds of others as appearances vary: we should not expect much additional comfort on earth from the most promising changes; nor yield to trepidation or despondency in times of danger or publick calamity; and we should shew that we are "not afraid "of evil tidings, as our hearts are fixed, trusting in "the Lord," "whose kingdom is an everlasting "kingdom, and his dominion endureth to all genera-"tions:" that so manifesting that "our minds are "stayed upon God, and kept in perfect peace," when "the hearts of others are moved, as the trees of the "wood are moved by the wind;" we may convince all around us, that they only are blessed who trust in, and serve, the Lord.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

Theological and Literary Book Store,

NO. 52, CORNER OF SECOND AND CHESNUT STREETS,
PHILADELPHIA.

WILLIAM W. WOODWARD,
PROPOSES TO PRINT BY SUBSCRIPTION,

DISSERTATIONS,

HISTORICAL, CRITICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND MORAL,

ON THE

MOST MEMORABLE EVENTS OF THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS:

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

JAMES SAURIN,

PASTOR OF THE FRENCH CHURCH AT THE HAGUE;

M. ROQUES, OF BASLE,

AND C. S. DE BEAUSOBRE, OF BERLIN;

To which are Added,

ORIGINAL NOTES, ILLUSTRATIONS, AND CHRONOLOGICAL ARRANGEMENTS;

BY F. A. COX, A. M.

Extract from the London Editor's Proposal.

THESE discourses were published in Holland nearly a century ago, at the expense of a merchant, whose impression of their excellence induced him to devote 100,000 gilders, or nearly *Ten Thousand Pounds* English to the purpose. It has been a subject of frequent surprize, that a work of such value and magnitude has never been translated into our native language. The first folio volume indeed appeared in English in the year 1723, by J. Chamberlayne, Esq. under the patronage of the Royal Family, and dedicated to Prince Frederick; but the imperfections of that performance, the quaintness of the style, the small portion of the work it embraces, and the total deficiency of plates and illustrations, supersede the necessity of any apology for a new and enlarged translation.

The celebrated VANDER MARCH, Lord of Leur, devoted 25 years to the original work, the splendid designs of which, by HOET, HOUBRAKEN, and PICART, are explained at foot, in Greek, Latin, English, French, High and Low Dutch.

It is the intention of the editor to render the present undertaking worthy of similar encouragement in England to that which distinguished it in Holland; and he flatters himself, that though the plates and decorations, which will be correctly and beautifully executed, may increase the price, yet being evidently indispensible to the beauty, utility, and completeness of the work, they will secure the public approbation.

The original volumes abound in a copious selection of whatever is remarkable in Biblical History, curious in Criticism, or important in Divinity; and the present translator will endeavour to contribute as much as possible to their perfection, by new information and remarks, in the form of *Notes*, with other necessary or useful additions; that the whole may prove a valuable acquisition to the gentleman, the scholar, and especially the Biblical student.

The translation of Saurin's Sermons from the French, by the late Rev. Robert Robinson, and Dr. H. Hunter, which met with so much and such deserved success, being published in *octavo*, it has been thought advisable to adopt the same size, with plates in *quarto*, for the present translation; that the English reader may have the advantage of possessing more of Saurin's Works, in an uniform size.

"*This is his (Saurin's) greatest and most valuable work.* * * * * *It is full of learning: it is indeed a collection of the opinions of the best authors, both Christian and Heathen, of the Philosophers, Historians, and Critics, in every subject which the author examines.*"

ENCICLOP. BRIT. Art. SAURIN.

"*This work of M. Saurin is not one of that description in which there are nothing but trifles, or things obvious to every reader of the Scriptures. There will be found a thousand useful and interesting inquiries in it which might never have been thought of without his assistance. They are disposed in excellent order, and expressed with such accuracy and elegance, that the perusal of them cannot fail of affording peculiar pleasure.*"

LE CLERC BIBL. Anc. & Mod. Tom. xii. p. 2. An. 1719.

TERMS OF PUBLISHING.

I. To be printed from the London copy, which will be received as it is translated and published in London; and on a neat type and paper, which shall deserve the Public's approbation and patronage.

II. To be published in six or eight volumes octavo; as contemplated by the London Publishers, and as the work is not yet received from London, and the number of Engravings accompanying the work not yet ascertained, the price per vol. cannot be accurately mentioned. But the Public may rest assured that economy in price, as well as the

good quality of materials, and neatness of typography, shall be carefully attended to.

III. As the work, on account of engravings, &c. will be attended with considerable expence, the publisher wishes to see 500 names on his list before he can commence the publication. When Vol. I. is printed, if not before, the price and extent of this valuable work will be more accurately ascertained.

IV. It is not expected to exceed 3 dollars 50 cents per vol. and perhaps may be delivered to subscribers for less than 3 dollars each volume, delivered as published, and to be paid for on delivery; neatly bound and lettered, unless preferred in boards, which can be mentioned at the time of subscribing.

V. For every *five* subscribed for, or purchased, and for which security shall be given for payment, the *sixth* copy will be delivered *gratis*.

VI. Payment of the postage of letters, in which subscribers' names are contained, will be expected from those who obtain subscriptions.

VII. The Volumes will be packed and delivered to orders; but the subscribers will recollect that they must divide the expences of freight and carriage among themselves, which will be but a trifle to each person.

BOOKS PUBLISHED BY W. W. WOODWARD.

Baxter's Miscellanies,

Containing Call to the Unconverted; Converse with God in Solitude, and Dying Thoughts. Price 1 dollar—bound in 1 volume.

Miscellaneous Works of the Rev. Charles Buck,

(Author of the Theological Dictionary;) containing the Young Christian's Guide, or, suitable Directions, Cautions, and Encouragement, to the believer on his first entrance into the divine life—A treatise on Religious Experience; in which its Nature, Evidences, and Advantages, are considered—Together with Anecdotes, Religious, Moral, and Entertaining: alphabetically arranged, and interspersed with a variety of useful observations: in 3 volumes, price 3 dollars.

The Young Christian's Guide,

"We cannot recollect when we have read a performance of this nature, that has afforded us a higher degree of satisfaction; or which, in our opinion, is better calculated for the instruction and entertainment of young people. We shall be truly sorry, if it be not introduced into many religious families, and particularly into the numerous seminaries in and about the metropolis." *Bib. and Theo. Review.*

"This is a useful and sensible book. The christian will read it with pleasure and benefit. Every page contains admonitions which must be appropriate; and the statements and directions are throughout illustrated and enforced, by Anecdotes of eminent Christians."

Eclectic Review.

Treatise on Religious Experience.

"We doubt not this book will be perused with great advantage by all classes of Christians. The reader will find many serious and judicious remarks. The whole is, in our opinion, pious, evangelical and useful" *Evangelical Review.*

"We recommend this Work to serious minds, as likely to prove of considerable use and benefit." *Eclectic Review.*

"There is much in this book on which every Christian may meditate with advantage: much seriousness and sincerity of mind: much reflection on religious subjects: much knowledge of the human heart, and of the manner in which divine grace affects and improves it, are here displayed." *British Critic.*

Anecdotes.

"This work is well calculated for young persons, and may prove in many cases a very acceptable present to them, as it conveys much instruction mingled with entertainment. It will also serve for a pleasing companion to the traveller in the chaise, or the stage-coach. In short, it affords a copious fund of rational amusement for a leisure hour. We have no doubt but it will obtain, as it certainly merits, an extensive circulation." *Evangelical Review.*

FOR PRESS.

Helps to Composition;

Or, six hundred Skeletons of Sermons, several being the substance of Sermons preached before the University, by the Rev. Charles Simeon, M. A. Fellow of King's College, Cambridge: from the second London edition, in 5 large octavo vols. at 2 dollars 50 cents per volume, to subscribers....will shortly go to press. The work contains, besides the Skeletons, Claud's Essays, and ten complete Sermons on the Christian Armour. Also, a Sermon on the Gospel Message. This work is contemplated for press in a few weeks.

Christian Memoirs,

In the form of a New Pilgrimage to the Heavenly Jerusalem, containing, by way of Allegorical Narrative, a great variety of Dialogues on the most interesting subjects....and adventures of eminently Religious Persons....by William Shrubsole, late minister at Bethel Chapel, Sheerness. From the third London edition, with the Life of the Author, 1 dollar 25 cents.

JUST PUBLISHED,

The Christian Preacher,

Or, Discourses on Preaching, by several eminent Divines. English and Foreign; revised and abridged, with an appendix, on the choice of Books: by Edward Williams, D. D. Author of the abridgment of Owen on the Hebrews, &c. &c. in one neat 12mo vol.